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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 45th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BARAC (Romania)
(Vice-Chairman)

later: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)
(Chairman)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 77: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.52, L.53, L.55, L.56)

Draft resolution on environment and international trade (A/C.2/46/L.52)

1. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and drew attention to several changes. Concerning the second preambular paragraph, he said that "poverty" should be replaced by "underdevelopment", the original choice of the Group of 77, and expressed the hope that, in future, editors would not make substantive changes without first consulting the Group of 77. He also read out minor drafting changes to the operative part. He said that the Group of 77 attached particular importance to the integrating of the concepts of environment and development and hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on the Trade and Development Board (A/C.2/46/L.53)

2. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77. The draft resolution reflected the outcome of the recent session of the Trade and Development Board and gave an indication of what the Group of 77 expected from the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). It had been formulated with a view to the forthcoming session of UNCTAD and, it was hoped, would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on adjustment of the Trade Control Measures Information System of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, as called for by the General Assembly in resolution 45/210 (A/C.2/46/L.56)

3. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77. The Trade Control Measures Information System provided information on a wide spectrum of trade measures, including advice to exporters. It conducted analyses of trends and policies in world trade and prepared reference materials for use by trade associations in connection with the Uruguay Round. The purpose of the draft resolution was to expedite the adaptation of the Trade Control Measures Information System, in accordance with paragraph 1 (b) of General Assembly resolution 45/210. The draft resolution was practical in nature and the Group of 77 hoped of that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution on economic measures as a means of political and economic coercion against developing countries (A/C.2/46/L.55)

4. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77. Measures adopted by developed countries against certain developing countries impeded their development and the Group of 77 believed they were

(Mr. Kufuor, Ghana)

illegal. The Group of 77 attached great importance to the draft resolution, particularly the final preambular paragraph and paragraph 4. It hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.44)

Draft resolution on assistance for the reconstruction and development of Djibouti (A/C.2/46/L.44)

5. Mr. AL-NAILI (Saudi Arabia) introduced the draft resolution and said that Nicaragua and Suriname had joined as sponsors. Drawing attention to the Secretary-General's summary report on Djibouti (A/46/316), he said that, as a result of recent events in the region, Djibouti had experienced an influx of refugees and displaced persons and a decline in trade. That had occurred at a time when it was attempting to recover from the impact of severe drought. An estimate of the financial losses sustained by the Government of Djibouti was contained in the Secretary-General's report (para. 28). The international community had provided generous assistance to Djibouti, but the magnitude of the political and economic difficulties arising from its geographical location made additional support necessary. Additional resources were also necessary to promote investment, and to ease the social costs of economic restructuring (paras. 32 and 33). All Member States were urged to increase their assistance to Djibouti and to adopt the draft resolution by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 88: HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.54)

Draft resolution on developing human resources for development (A/C.2/46/L.54)

6. Mr. KUFUOR (Ghana) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that it would be adopted by consensus.

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/48, A/46/86-S/22226, A/46/264, 293, 308, 315, 336, 344, 423, 501/Rev.1, 520, 598; A/C.2/46/4)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/46/602, 264, 273, A/46/283-E/1991/114, A/46/336, 344, 345, 501/Rev.1, 520, 598)

7. Miss ANSTEE (Director-General, United Nations Office at Vienna, and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to Coordinate United Nations Efforts to Counter the Impact of the Burning Oil Wells and Other Environmental Consequences of the Gulf Conflict in Kuwait and in the Region) pointed to striking similarities between the man-made environmental disasters in Chernobyl and in Kuwait. Both were unprecedented in scope and nature, giving a sinister new meaning to the word "interdependence". Both had had

(Miss Anstee)

transboundary effects, and, in both cases, the full extent of the damage would be known only after close, sustained monitoring over time. The Government of Kuwait had no doubt been aware of those analogies when it requested the Secretary-General to model United Nations assistance on its response to Chernobyl.

8. In her capacity as the Secretary-General's Personal Representative, she had made a first visit to Kuwait in early October, where she had met with high-level government representatives and discussed technical matters with Dr. Al-Awadi, head of the Emergency Environmental Committee and Executive Secretary of the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), and with the Kuwait Environment Protection Council. She had been accompanied by representatives of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) so that her efforts would be consistent with initiatives already undertaken.

9. She had been taken to witness the burning oil wells and flown by helicopter over waters and lands ruined by war. All accounts of the disaster paled by comparison with reality: a wall of billowing black smoke, hundreds of metres high, interspersed with great bursts of flame, and generating intolerable heat. The desert itself was a blackened crust of burnt oil, flecked with charred vegetation and interspersed with large lakes of oil.

10. The response to the disaster had shown remarkable resilience. While the conflict had still been raging, United States authorities had estimated that, if more than 100 oil wells had been set on fire, the situation would have been hopeless. And yet, by early November, a total of 732 burning Kuwaiti oil wells had been capped, barely seven months after the war's end. The operation had been carried out by a Kuwaiti team, headed by a Kuwaiti woman engineer. In an unprecedented display of international cooperation, 27 teams from nine countries had employed inventive techniques and worked under intolerable conditions of heat, noise and danger.

11. In addition to the oil-well fires, there had been oil spills into the Gulf waters. Mines were omnipresent, the desert ecology had been harmed, and there was the problem of hazardous waste. Environmental damage caused by the war fell into three main areas: air pollution, which affected the health of the population, particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, asthmatics and those with chronic bronchitis or cardiac diseases; land pollution, which had implications for grazing and agriculture, and desert flora and fauna; and marine pollution, which destroyed the marine environment, fisheries and wildlife. The consumption of polluted agricultural produce and polluted drinking water or seafood carried additional health risks.

12. The multiplicity of responses to the monumental disaster - from Governments, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations system, academic and scientific institutions, the private sector and individuals - had made it necessary to ensure that efforts were not duplicated. Coordinating

(Miss Anstee)

and mobilizing international support for the rehabilitation process had an all-important technical aspect, which included the initial survey, impact assessment, and the identification of needs and necessary action. It also had an international aspect, for the world-wide significance of the problem must be highlighted; and a financial aspect, for there must be sufficient resources to ensure the implementation of an agreed plan of action.

13. Spectacular technical progress had been achieved, especially in assessing impact and identifying preliminary needs. Particularly impressive were the achievements of the Kuwaiti authorities, under the leadership of Dr. Al-Awadi, despite the fact that Kuwait's scientific equipment and records had been decimated. Assistance had been provided by many countries in the Gulf region, the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME), the Saudi Arabian Meteorology and Environmental Protection Agency and the international community. The United Nations had sent a mission in March/April 1991; its findings were contained in document S/22535. She drew attention in particular to sections IV and V of that report (paras. 136-225).

14. Under the leadership of UNEP and in cooperation with ROPME, other United Nations agencies had joined in the relief effort, principally the International Maritime Organization and the World Meteorological Organization. A number of non-governmental organizations and research institutes had also furnished assistance. Many of the relief activities had been financed by Member States on a bilateral basis or through the United Nations system. UNEP had submitted a report on the first phase of an inter-agency plan of action to a ministerial meeting of ROPME in mid-October.

15. In the second phase, detailed, costed programmes and projects would be elaborated in response to the needs identified in the report. It was hoped that that would form the basis for a document to be submitted to countries outside the Persian Gulf area at the funding-strategy meeting on the proposed programme for the socio-economic and environmental revival of countries affected by the Gulf crisis, to be convened in New York in December by UNDP.

16. Technical studies indicated that the impact of the burning oil wells had been less severe than anticipated, owing to the unexpected evaporation of certain toxic elements in the smoke plume and the fact that the fires had been extinguished before seasonal winds veered in the direction of Kuwait City. However, it was impossible to predict the long-term health effects of the fires or the psychological effects on a population compelled to live in darkness all day long.

17. International concern and support must be maintained for a problem that was truly international in scope. Already the consequences of the disaster had been felt at great distances from Kuwait, and the scientific lessons learned from the experience would have universal applicability. She therefore welcomed the emphasis placed on the issue in the Second Committee and hoped that it would receive special attention at the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

(Miss Anstee)

18. As programmes and projects were costed, it would become possible to estimate the financial component more precisely. Already, the global estimate was in the billion-dollar range. The UNEP fund of $2.6 million had either been committed or actually utilized for initial technical work. Contributions in kind - services and equipment, and scientific personnel, and studies - were also necessary to restore Kuwait's shattered research capability. There were three promising sources of funding. The first was the United Nations compensation fund contemplated by Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which could be utilized in cases of damage to the environment and natural resources. She had already engaged in preliminary discussions with the administrator of the fund. However, the procedure for drawing up the fund might be lengthy, whereas the needs in Kuwait were immediate.

19. The second possible source was Kuwait itself and the Governments of the region. Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and other countries had already expended considerable sums on clean-up and assessment and felt that the entire burden for an international problem should not fall on the Gulf countries alone. Moreover, the oil-well fires had cost Kuwait $2 billion and significant losses in oil reserves. It was estimated that not even 45 per cent of the damaged wells could be restored, and overall production was not expected to reach normal levels until 1994.

20. For that reason, she hoped that the third source of funding - the international community - would provide generous assistance which could be channelled through ROPME and the Governments of the region. Thus far, her office had managed to function within the limits of the resources available to it. However, it would have to be modestly strengthened as its activities expanded. It was her intention to make a fuller visit to the region in 1992.

21. Mr. INSANALLY (Guyana), speaking on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community, said that the Caribbean Community was pleased that preparations for the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development were well under way. Since the major organizational issues had largely been resolved, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference should endeavour to reach agreement on substantive issues. In particular, there were three areas of concern, agreement on which would determine the success of the Conference, namely: the provision of new and additional financial resources to developing countries, the transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional and preferential terms, and the restructuring of multilateral institutions for the promotion of sustainable development.

22. The Caribbean Community was firmly convinced that the commitment of new and additional financial resources for the promotion of sustainable and environmentally sound development in developing countries should be commensurate with the developed countries' responsibility for the greater part of global environmental degradation. The environmental imperative should not impose new conditions on the provision of development assistance to developing countries, and the intrinsic link between environment and development should

(Mr. Insanally, Guyana)

be observed at all times. Moreover, it was necessary to ensure that developing countries received adequate financial assistance that would enable them to participate in the final stages of the process culminating in the Earth Summit.

23. The Caribbean Community was fully aware of the role of technology in the implementation of environmentally sound policies. The small developing Caribbean countries relied on the transfer of technology, in large part from the developed North, and their success in promoting environmentally safe and sustainable development would depend on the degree to which the requisite technology was transferred to it on concessional and non-commercial terms. The Community was highly interested in developing an indigenous technological capacity, and it hoped that training would be an important component of technology transfers.

24. Multilateral institutions, in particular those which dealt with environmental issues, should plan their operations to meet the challenges of promoting sustainable development in developing countries. That would require close and continuing coordination between the relevant United Nations agencies, regional organizations and Governments.

25. The Conference should result in firm political commitments to undertake realistic programmes of action. The timely preparation of a framework convention on climate change was of particular concern to the countries of the Caribbean Community, all of which were vulnerable to climate change. The Caribbean Community had participated actively in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee through its membership in the Alliance of Small Island States, and it would take an active part in the upcoming fourth session of that Committee, to be held at Geneva from 9 to 20 December 1991.

26. Mr. SWE (Myanmar) said that his delegation was especially pleased that, in its decision 3/2, the Preparatory Committee for the Conference had requested the Secretary-General to "integrate fully development considerations and needs and realities, in particular of the developing countries, in all Agenda 21 programme documents". While the final programme for Agenda 21 was far from complete, it was heartening that the Preparatory Committee had reached agreement on its structure.

27. His delegation was pleased that, at the third session of the Preparatory Committee, there had been general agreement on the need for financial resources from external sources to help developing countries meet the cost of achieving sustainable development and implement the programmes contained in Agenda 21. With regard to funding mechanisms, the proposal to establish a special Green Fund to provide adequate new and additional financial resources should be given serious consideration. Any funding mechanism that was established should be transparent and ensure equitable representation by developed and developing countries.

(Mr. Swe, Myanmar)

28. The transfer of environmentally sound technology on concessional and preferential terms was essential for the containment, reduction and elimination of environmental damage, but must be coupled with the protection of intellectual property rights. His delegation supported the idea of setting up a mechanism for purchasing patents on environmentally sound technology for their transfer to developing countries on non-commercial terms.

29. Of particular interest to his delegation was the issue of forests. While Myanmar was still formulating a definite position, it considered that any framework for global cooperative action on forests should uphold the principle of the sovereignty of States over their own natural resources and take into consideration the role of forests in economic development, including the subsistence requirements of developing countries. The framework should encompass all types of forests in all countries, and take account of the legitimate needs and concerns of the developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty.

30. Mr. BABINGTON (Australia) said that his delegation was concerned that, with only a little more than six months remaining before the Conference, many major issues were not being dealt with quickly enough. Negotiations should therefore be speeded up in order to ensure its success.

31. Success would depend largely on how effectively it dealt with the twin concerns of environment and sustainable development, and also with the cross-sectoral issues of financial resources, transfer of technology, trade and the environment, resource pricing and economic instruments. In addition, a great deal of work remained to be done on institutional questions.

32. His delegation hoped that the Conference would go beyond rhetoric and stimulate early, cooperative, practical and innovative approaches to achieving environmentally sound and sustainable development. The Conference should also develop practical strategies to deal with other important cross-sectoral issues, such as poverty alleviation and population, health and education, the role of indigenous peoples, and the concerns of women. Women were crucial to environmentally sound and sustainable economic growth and development, and their concerns should figure prominently in the work of the Preparatory Committee and the Conference itself and should be duly reflected in the Earth Charter and Agenda 21.

33. The framework convention on climate change should lead to the establishment of a permanent mechanism to coordinate efforts to control climate change. In order to be effective, that instrument should gain the adherence of the greatest possible number and most suitably balanced spread of countries, address all aspects of climate change, set limits on all greenhouse gas emissions not controlled by the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and include a full range of implementation measures. The convention should allow countries to develop strategies appropriate to their circumstances. In particular, it should address the interests of

(Mr. Babington, Australia)

low-lying, coastal, arid and semi-arid and small island countries. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the valuable contributions being made to the negotiating process by the Alliance of Small Island States.

34. His delegation hoped that an international convention to protect biological diversity would be concluded in time for the Conference. Such a convention should contain legally binding obligations and recognize the important contributions that traditional cultures could make.

35. Mr. TANLAY (Turkey) said that the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference should result in the adoption of final decisions on all the recommendations to be submitted to the Conference. That session should therefore be devoted exclusively to negotiations. His delegation hoped that the Earth Summit would lead to the adoption of the Earth Charter, Action 21, a framework convention on climate change, a convention on biological diversity, and proposals regarding institutional arrangements.

36. His delegation was pleased that decision 3/2 of the Preparatory Committee took account of the need to differentiate the actions to be taken by developed countries and those to be taken by developing countries. The consensus reached on that decision was a token of the common determination of States to prepare a wide-ranging Agenda 21 programme containing objectives, activities and means of implementation for specific action proposals.

37. Regional preparations for the Conference were of great importance, and the declarations and related documents issued at meetings held at Bergen, Bangkok, Mexico City and Abidjan had brought to light a number of common positions. Those declarations pointed out that the special problems of the developing countries must be taken into consideration and that the industrialized countries were chiefly responsible for global environmental damage. It had also been underscored that the environmental considerations were an integral part of development, which meant that, in order to achieve sustainable development, the developing countries must have access to environmentally sound technologies and to additional financial resources; those two points should guide the work of the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee and of the Conference itself.

38. Mr. VASILIEV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the Soviet Union attached paramount importance to the growing involvement of the United Nations in developing and implementing international strategies to reverse environmental degradation. A cooperative spirit at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee would ensure that the final documents of the Conference - Agenda 21 and the Earth Charter - reflected a new global consensus that laid the economic, legal and organizational foundations for international cooperation in environmental protection. It was important that the preparatory process and the work and outcome of the Conference fully reflected the indivisibility of the biosphere, the interdependence of the modern world and the rights of future generations. The preparations should

(Mr. Vasiliev, USSR)

allow for the participation of a wide range of States, intergovernmental, governmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as business and scientific circles.

39. The fourth session of the Preparatory Committee should focus on substantive negotiations to reach agreement on the draft final documents of the Conference. Every effort should be made to complete work on the Earth Charter and Agenda 21 and to reach agreement on framework conventions on climate change and biological diversity. It would also be desirable to draft an instrument dealing with forests. Work on the texts of protocols and other legal instruments that would supplement those conventions could be begun immediately after the conventions were signed and could reflect the outcome of the Conference.

40. In order to ensure the success of the preparations for the Conference, all participants should adopt a universal and comprehensive approach that respected the interests of all States. In order to achieve consensus and avoid unnecessary polemics, efforts should be concentrated on singling out and expanding areas of agreement. Such an approach would facilitate solutions to such complex issues as financing environmental activities at the global and national levels and the development of intergovernmental technological cooperation, including the transfer of technology.

41. The Soviet Union intended to carry out a well-considered national environmental policy and also take part in international cooperation projects on the basis of mutually acceptable conditions and principles. That would provide a real opportunity for ensuring the sustainable and environmentally sound development of the Soviet Union, which counted on the understanding and support of the international community.

42. A large and as yet almost untapped source of additional resources for environmental protection activities should be the savings from reduced military expenditure, both in the North and in the South. The conversion of military production for environmental purposes afforded considerable opportunities. The Soviet Union was seriously studying ways of using its air and naval bases to respond to such environmental problems as forest fires and oil spills.

43. The preventive aspect of United Nations environmental activities should be further developed. The international community should give serious consideration to environmentally criminal economic activities that could cause irreversible environmental damage. The United Nations - in particular, its prestigious International Law Commission - should examine the issue of environmental crimes, making use of existing international experience in that field.

44. Mr. In-Hyuk KWON (Republic of Korea) said that his delegation was pleased with the progress accomplished thus far by the Preparatory Committee. The Conference would provide an important opportunity to elaborate an innovative strategy for a sustainable future which did not jeopardize the environment or constrain development. At its final session, the Preparatory Committee should undertake frank assessment of past achievements and failures and provide guidance to facilitate the success of the Conference.

45. Environmentally sound and sustainable development should be the goal of developed and developing countries alike. The environmental objectives which the Conference hoped to achieve required the well-coordinated cooperation of both groups of countries, based on the principles of justice and fairness. Since it was the developed countries that were primarily responsible for creating risks to the global environment, they should take the lead in protecting it and bore the major responsibility for remedying environmental problems. Developing countries should share the burden to the extent that financial support and the transfer of clean technologies enabled them to do so. In addition, the unique situation of newly industrialized economies, including his own, which were experiencing rapid economic growth and had a high potential for further development, should receive due consideration, and regulatory measures for environmental protection should not impede their economic development.

46. With regard to the environment and international trade, while efforts within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to liberalize world trade should continue, environmental regulations should not be used as non-tariff barriers against the exports of developing countries.

47. Many differences remained to be resolved before work on the formulation of the Earth Charter and Agenda 21 could be considered successful. The Earth Charter should reflect a high standard of moral and political norms for all States and individuals in the pursuit of sustainable global development. Agenda 21 should highlight concrete action plans for an environmentally sound and sustainable development strategy.

48. If the goals of the Conference were to be fully implemented, substantial progress must be made on such cross-sectoral issues as the transfer of technology, funding mechanisms and institutional frameworks. A workable mechanism to promote the wider accessibility of environmentally clean technology should be elaborated on the basis of respect for free-market principles. Intellectual property rights must be redefined in order to resolve the serious contradiction between the need to place clean technology at the disposal of all who needed it and the need to protect the interests of the owners of such technology. His delegation proposed the establishment of a special United Nations task force to study practical modalities for the promotion of technological cooperation between developed and developing countries. Incentives such as tax deductions and favourable financing terms for private companies from industrialized countries which actively promoted technical cooperation with the developing countries merited further study.

(Mr. In-Hyuk Kwon, Republic of Korea)

49. With regard to the need to provide developing countries with additional financial assistance, an innovative mechanism should be established with contributions from developed countries, given their historical responsibility for global environmental degradation. Users' fees, emission charges and tradeable permits based on the "polluter pays" principle deserved careful consideration. While the Global Environmental Facility was a good starting point, the funding resources should be expanded substantially to implement a vast array of action plans to be included in Agenda 21. The institutional framework needed in order to follow up on the work of the Conference could be provided by strengthening existing coordinating functions within the United Nations system and by expanding UNEP so that it could effectively integrate environmental and development issues and promote financial and technical support for the developing countries.

50. Public awareness regarding global environmental protection was increasing daily in his country. To facilitate its active participation in the Conference, a government task force was preparing policy recommendations and guidelines for national activities relating to the Conference. His Government's report would be available by the end of 1991.

51. With reference to the proposed framework convention on climate change, he said that any control scheme for greenhouse gas emissions should regulate emissions of all such gases, since global warming could be mitigated only by reducing their total volume in the atmosphere. The importance of the sinks of those gases must be recognized and the net-emission concept should be taken into account in establishing stabilization targets.

52. Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil) said that the preparations for the forthcoming Conference - which were taking place during a period of far-reaching change in the international arena - had generated a dynamic negotiation process which should lead to decisions that went beyond the adoption of yet another programme of action or the refurbishment of international machinery for policy implementation. A genuine change in prevailing attitudes was required. The effectiveness and credibility of the decisions to be taken at the Conference depended on the capacity of Governments to overcome prejudices and established interests. The argument that the transboundary nature of some environmental problems faced by the international community called for a reduced role for Governments and an overhaul of the notion of State sovereignty overlooked the trend towards greater interdependence among nations. Effective strategies to deal with environmental and developmental challenges required efficient action by Governments as well as the private sector.

53. The overall mandate for the Conference established in General Assembly resolution 44/228 must be fulfilled; it was not enough to agree only on some of the issues. It was unfortunate that delegations had been unable at the third session of the Preparatory Committee to make the required progress on the central questions of financial resources and the transfer of technology.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

54. The need for funds could not be addressed simply by reallocating resources, which would be contrary to resolution 44/228. Official development assistance was declining and the transfer of financial resources to developed countries remained a serious problem, particularly for several heavily indebted countries of Latin America. His own delegation and the delegation of Argentina had submitted a proposal to the Preparatory Committee calling for the establishment of a fund for the promotion of sustainable development, one objective of which was to finance solutions to environmental problems and make investments necessitated by the incorporation of environmental concerns in development programmes and projects. The fund should also focus on expanding national technological capacities.

55. Bold action was needed in the Preparatory Committee to ensure that developing countries would be able to adopt environmentally sound policies based on the best available technology. The discussion should not be confined to repeating assertions that technologies were the domain of the private sector and that Governments therefore could not redress the imbalance between developed and developing countries in that regard. An innovative approach to intellectual property rights was needed, and possible actions included the reduction of the period of patent protection, financial incentives for funding research and development pertaining to clean technologies, and licensing arrangements that would ensure the access of developing countries to such technologies, without prejudice to adequate remuneration for investments in research and development.

56. Agreement on matters relating to financial resources and the transfer of technology would facilitate progress in the negotiations on Agenda 21 and on the final declaration of the Conference. The two documents should express the consensus of the international community on the political basis that should govern the action to be required of all States, in accordance with their respective levels of responsibility, for the protection of the environment and the promotion of development. They should also reflect the commitment of the international community, particularly those countries which had done most to deplete the environment, to deal with the environmental and developmental challenges from a rational and balanced perspective.

57. His delegation looked forward to the successful outcome of negotiations under way in the respective intergovernmental negotiating committees working on conventions on climate change and on biological diversity, and hoped that those conventions would be open for signature at the Conference. Further scientific research was needed to determine all the effects of the accumulation of greenhouse gases and the role of the sinks of such gases. Agenda 21 should include programmes to facilitate the fulfilment of the obligations to be undertaken by States under the convention on climate change. The Preparatory Committee could supplement the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on climate change by agreeing on activities to be included in the programme areas of Agenda 21 on the protection of the atmosphere which had been identified at the Committee's third session.

(Mr. Sardenberg, Brazil)

58. The commitments of the developed and the developing countries would, of necessity, differ, since the developed countries bore the primary responsibility for excessive levels of greenhouse gas emissions, while the developing countries played only an insignificant role in their accumulation and should not be expected to make commitments inconsistent with their national development needs. Commitments regarding the sources and sinks of greenhouse gases should be balanced.

59. The ability of the developing countries to participate in any international regime to prevent climate change would depend on the provision of new and additional financial resources and on the transfer of technology, issues which required close attention in the negotiations.

60. Mr. SHEBANI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his country had, on numerous occasions, urged the world, and particularly the affluent countries and those that had caused mass environmental destruction in the past, to be governed by reason in their approach to environmental protection. It had done everything in its power at the bilateral, regional and international levels to call attention to the dangers posed to the environment and to warn of the consequences of its abuse and exploitation.

61. His country supported cooperation in devising ways and means of preserving the planet, since the integrity of the environment was in the interest of all. The role of the United Nations in environmental protection was to be commended, and Libya was ready to play its part for the success of the 1992 Conference. There were grounds for hope that the Conference would adopt recommendations and resolutions of great significance to present and future generations.

62. It had been cooperation among agencies, together with financial and material support provided at the national level, that had rescued Libya and its neighbours in the Mediterranean region from the dangers of the screw-worm infestation. Libya appreciated the efforts made and the assistance provided by the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other bodies in eliminating that pest. The expenditures made, however, had undoubtedly been at the expense of development.

63. Libya, as well as many other developing countries, continued to suffer from the after-effects of the colonialist era. Colonialism had left behind it, quite intentionally, a legacy that had caused the gravest harm to the environment of countries that had acceeded to independence. It had left extensive minefields, without providing maps showing their location, and it had left continuing fear and destruction. His country still suffered from the remnants of international and colonialist wars in which it had had no part, and those remnants continued to cause much damage to the environment and to consume enormous financial and human resources. Hundreds of plantations had been burnt, much livestock had been killed and many innocent people had been

(Mr. Shebani, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)

killed or mutilated by mines and other explosives. Remnants of war and the accidents that they caused were a heavy burden for the environment and development, and they constituted an enormous obstacle to progress. His country therefore had a legitimate right to stress the principle of compensation for the damage caused by them.

64. Many resolutions had been adopted by the United Nations and other organizations calling upon the countries responsible to provide the necessary information and technical assistance for the removal of remnants of war and to pay compensation for the losses to which they gave rise. The countries concerned should display a sense of responsibility and respond to the appeals of the international community to meet their obligations under the terms of the General Assembly resolutions on the matter.

65. Libya had spared no effort to improve the environment while working for growth and development. It had done much for the development of the human being, had reclaimed thousands of hectares of land and had played a pioneer role in promoting education, health, housing, transport, telecommunications and the welfare of children and women. In doing so, it had encountered many environmental problems and challenges to development, the most salient of which were desertification and the scarcity of water resources.

66. In that context, it had executed the greatest man-made river project ever known, and therewith it aspired to overcome adverse environmental circumstances and ensure a life of dignity for future generations. Under the project, water was being pumped from deep beneath the Libyan desert and transported to the coast for use as drinking water and in agriculture and industry. Phase I of the project had been completed, and 2 million cubic metres of water were being pumped every day. The project demonstrated the determination of the Libyan Arab people to meet the challenges of the environment, growth and development, and that people looked to the international community for support for its efforts and for assistance in the financing of the further expansion of a great humanitarian and environmental project that would promote development and combat desertification.

67. Mr. MONTAÑO (Mexico) said that his country accorded high priority to environmental issues in its development policy and was convinced that a responsible solution to local environmental problems contributed substantially to the solution of global problems. The Tlatelolco Platform on Environment and Development adopted at the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Conference held in his country in March 1991 stated that the solution of environmental problems and the promotion of sustainable development depended heavily on international cooperation and, in particular, on the availability of new and additional resources and access to environmentally sound technologies on concessional terms. The developed countries should be the major contributors in view of their greater responsibility for the global process of environmental degradation.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

68. It was clear from the report of the third session of the Preparatory Committee that greater political will was required, particularly on the part of the developed countries, to resolve the outstanding substantive issues, disagreement on which was impeding a clear expression of the link between environment and development. The developing countries stood ready to play a constructive role in the negotiations.

69. The Conference should serve as a forum for the adoption of agreements, and not as yet another negotiating phase. Agenda 21, one of the most important topics to be discussed, should include practical priorities and commitments while allowing room for the later incorporation of new relevant features. The Earth Charter should be a legal document which should provide guidelines for promoting the development of environmental law and incorporate principles relating to environment and development.

70. The funding mechanism to be established should reflect the level of commitments adopted and it should accord equal priority to global and local problems. Decision-making should proceed on an equitable basis.

71. Noting that institutional arrangements would be critical in ensuring that agreements reached at the Conference were carried out, he stressed the need for a representative United Nations forum which would keep issues relating to the environment and development under constant review. To that end, the activities of UNEP should be strengthened.

72. His delegation supported the adoption of an instrument containing commitments relating to the preservation of biological diversity as well as to financial resources and technology transfer. However, his delegation would not support a binding instrument requiring the developing countries to make commitments on the conservation of biological diversity without concomitant commitments on the part of the developed countries to pay for their access to that biodiversity. The level of resources committed by the developed countries should be commensurate with the effort of developing countries to conserve biological diversity.

73. While all States shared the responsibility to reduce emissions of ozone-depleting substances, the proposed convention on climate change should establish differentiated commitments for developed and developing countries, since the former were the major source of emissions implicated in global warming. The negotiations under way should result in qualitative and quantitative commitments for emission reduction.

74. With regard to forests, his delegation favoured the adoption of a non-binding international consensus on principles governing the conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests which respected the right of States to administer their forest resources in accordance with their national interests.

(Mr. Montaño, Mexico)

75. With regard to the oceans, his country believed that the principles enunciated in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea provided the appropriate framework for the conservation and sustainable development of the oceans and their resources. The Convention safeguarded the sovereign rights of coastal States in waters within their jurisdiction.

76. With regard to the environmentally sound management of hazardous wastes, his country continued to favour the adoption of a protocol to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal which would establish procedures governing responsibility and indemnification. The responsibilities of developed and developing countries in that regard should differ. Countries which produced hazardous wastes, including nuclear wastes, should dispose of them in their own territory and should not export them to developing countries.

77. The Rio Conference would be the first step in a process whereby the international community would elaborate new forms of cooperation for the preservation of the environment and access to sustainable development, as called for in General Assembly resolution 44/228. He urged delegations to demonstrate flexibility at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee, for it would be difficult to reach a consensus at the Conference on any issues left pending during that session.

78. Mr. ACHARYA (Nepal) said that the general enthusiasm for the Conference testified to the growing concern of the international community with safeguarding the environment. The Conference should be a landmark event resulting in a fundamental change in approach towards the environment.

79. In Nepal, environmental deterioration was having a devastating impact. As a small step forward, his Government had created a national framework for development and conservation and an environmental impact assessment system. The conventional economic philosophy of mass production and unrestricted choice governing market forces was directly opposed to the principle of careful use of finite natural resources. The grinding poverty of one fifth of mankind had wrought havoc on fragile natural reources. For example, people living in remote areas of his country might not be aware of the chain reaction resulting from deforestation, but they knew its immediate consequences: landslides and fuelwood shortages. Despite that knowledge, abject poverty compelled them to cut more trees in their struggle for survival. While it was encouraging that the international community had recognized at last the vital link between development and environment, its actual behaviour had not yet changed.

80. With regard to preparations for the Conference, the proposed institutional and legal instruments were too important to be left outside the Conference mechanism if effective and continuing implementation of Conference decisions was to be ensured. The proposed Earth Charter and the Agenda 21 programme were both welcome developments.

(Mr. Acharya, Nepal)

81. Under cross-sectoral issues, poverty, health and education and their relationship to environment must be emphasized, along with transfer of environmentally sound and appropriate technology to developing countries. Additional funding would be required to help developing countries implement programmes adopted at the Conference. In the administration of such a fund, the principle of equity, capacity and contribution to environmental damage should be weighed. Strengthened partnership was the only way to achieve lasting action to reverse environmental degradation. Active participation by a large number of non-governmental organizations was also important, because of their wide influence at the local level.

82. The fundamental question to be answered at the Conference was how to safeguard the future without neglecting the present. Short-term sacrifice might be required, but such sacrifices could be viewed as high-return investments.

83. Ms. PERKOVIĆ (Yugoslavia) said that preparations for the Conference had entered a substantive phase, but progress so far had been disappointing. Failure to treat environmental problems as an integral part of development could endanger the entire process. More flexibility and cooperation was required on the part of all participants in the preparatory process. Because of their responsibility as major polluters, the developed countries should demonstrate greater readiness to change their production and consumption patterns. Likewise, they should support the efforts of developing countries by providing new and additional financial resources and favourable access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies. Consequently, developing countries would be in a position to take a more active part in environmental protection and could use their own resources in a more rational way.

84. The report of the Preparatory Committee (A/46/48) illustrated the complexity of the issues involved. The deliberations had not yet provided answers to questions such as how to deal with poverty as a major cause of environmental degradation in developing countries; how and at what pace to make qualitative changes in development policies and international cooperation in order to achieve sustainable development; and how best to ensure the realization of national priorities by relying on subregional, regional and global cooperation. Her delegation welcomed the agreement reached on the stucture and organization of Agenda 21 and the progress on the question of transfer of technology. Useful suggestions concerning general rights and obligations to be incorporated in an Earth Charter had been made, but difficult negotiations on the draft still lay ahead. Among other important issues to be dealt with by the Preparatory Committee were protection of the atmosphere, forests, seas and oceans and soil, and hazardous-waste management.

85. Yugoslavia had finalized its national report for the Conference, although the report had been written during a time of economic and political turmoil. Still, the report was a product of concerted efforts by all republics, and they had all given it their endorsement. The work on the report had confirmed that many environmental issues in Yugoslavia could not be treated in isolation

(Mr. Perković, Yugoslavia)

successfully, and their resolution required comprehensive international support. Her Government expected the Conference to propose an effective system of assistance to developing countries in addressing environmental problems within a framework of sustainable development.

86. Mr. JIN Yongjian (China) said that a positive result of the preparations for the Conference was the large number of developing countries which had intensified their consultations and coordination on environment and development in order to facilitate their participation. His Government had hosted a conference on environment and development at the ministerial level in June 1991, with more than 40 developing countries participating; their positions were reflected in the Beijing Declaration. The efforts of the international community since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 44/228 had established a good foundation for the success of the forthcoming Conference; nevertheless, serious problems still remained.

87. The relationship between environmental issues and development must be further rationalized. Within the framework of Agenda 21, many proposals for addressing environmental issues had been made, but so far, no detailed documentation had been proposed on development issues such as external debt and unfavourable terms of trade. The relationship between poverty, economic growth, international trade, commodities, external debt and net transfer of resources should be the focus of the next stage.

88. Environmental issues must be closely linked to such cross-sectoral issues as financial resources and transfer of technology. Because of time constraints, the Preparatory Committee had not held in-depth discussions on those issues at its third session, but the developed countries had not been ready to discuss the matter in any detail or to make commitments. With just over six months left before the Conference, the Preparatory Committee must begin negotiations on financial resources and transfer of technology. Every delegation must be fully prepared for the negotiations on essential cross-sectoral issues, and a strong political will would be vital to ensure substantive progress.

89. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on a framework convention on climate change established by General Assembly resolution 45/212 had made significant progress. Climate change had a bearing on the social and economic interests and even the survival of all countries, though developed and developing countries bore different responsibilities for climate change and had varying capacity to address its impact. The convention, therefore, should be based on the principle of equity and differentiated responsibility between developed and developing countries, and it should contain specific commitments by developed countries to provide new and additional financial resources and related technology to the developing countries for joint efforts in response to global climate change. The conclusion of the convention, however, would be only a starting point for a long-term process of addressing climate change.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
46th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 November 1991
at 3 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 46th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/48 (Supplement No. 48, Vols. 1 and 2), A/46/86-S/22226, A/46/264, A/46/293, A/46/308, A/46/315, A/46/336, A/46/344, A/46/423, A/46/501/Rev.1, A/46/520, A/46/598; A/C.2/46/4)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/46/264, A/46/273, A/46/283-E/1991/114, A/46/336, A/46/344, A/46/345, A/46/501/Rev.1, A/46/520, A/46/598, A/46/602)

1. Mr. LEE (World Health Organization) said that the World Health Organization (WHO) had participated actively in the preparatory process of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in order to identify health issues in the context of the environment and development. It had also attended all the sessions of the Preparatory Committee and had prepared background documents for the working groups on substantive issues such as toxic chemicals, water and hazardous wastes. WHO had also seconded a senior staff member to the secretariat of the Conference for two years. The major input into the preparatory process of the Conference had been provided through the work of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment and its panels on energy, industry, urbanization and food and agriculture. The Commission, chaired by Mrs. Simone Veil of France, had held its last meeting in July 1991, and its report, together with the reports of the individual panels, would be available in March 1992. The Commission had undertaken a comprehensive review of the relationship between health, the environment and development and had looked into the causes of ill health and made many recommendations for future action and research in the many interfaces of environment and development with human health.

2. He was pleased to say that the Commission's recommendations were very much in line with the proposals contained in Agenda 21. One of the most important conclusions of the WHO Commission on Health and Environment was that, despite the high priority that people gave to health, health had been largely ignored in the debate about environment and development. As a result, policies, programmes and projects that could have improved health had not been given adequate attention. Those concerns must be dealt with by Agenda 21. Second, the Commission had given the highest priority to meeting basic health needs related to the environment. It had highlighted the plight of millions of people who died or became ill each year because of correctable developmental insufficiencies and environmental degradation. In such areas, social and economic development was of the utmost priority. Third, the Commission had also noted that to achieve health for all, high priority should be given to reducing population growth rates, overconsumption and waste generation. Fourth, the Commission and its panels had reviewed existing knowledge on the relationship between health and the environment. It had concluded that, although much had been learned over past years, much more research was required. The Commission had stated that "good science" must

(Mr. Lee, WHO)

take a more central role in the decision-making process. Lastly, the Commission had referred to the need for much greater initiatives on the part of the health sector in assisting all government sectors dealing with development policy and planning so as to ensure that human health was made to benefit from development and from protection of the environment. Those priorities identified by the Commission were fully reflected in Agenda 21.

3. When deciding on the action programmes contained in Agenda 21 at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee, there would have to be strong emphasis on health in the context of environment and development. Health must also have a prominent place in the Earth Charter. There must be a recognition that human health was the driving force in promoting a healthy environment and that the two together constituted an essential aim of development. Development that sought economic gain at the cost of health could not be tolerated. Similarly, development that degraded the environment to the point where ill health was created could not be accepted.

4. Mr. AL-HUMAIDI (Qatar), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, said that, in resolution 44/228, the General Assembly had decided to convene the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development with the highest possible level of participation in order to elaborate strategies and measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation in the context of increased national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries.

5. The States members of the Gulf Cooperation Council were awaiting the Conference with great interest, especially in view of the ecological disaster which had occurred in the Gulf region as a result of the recent war, in which 700 oil wells had been set alight and over 3 million barrels of petroleum had been discharged into the sea. He expressed appreciation to the countries which had provided economic or other assistance to alleviate the effects of that disaster. He also hoped that the international community would continue to assist in the rehabilitation of the Gulf region.

6. The Gulf countries expressed support for the Conference with a view to securing sustainable and ecologically sound economic development. Although the task was immense, few conferences of the United Nations had attracted such a high level of attention and concern. As a result of the far-reaching changes in the relations between East and West and other major shifts throughout the world in recent years, the Conference would be held in an atmosphere of cooperation. The Conference was a forum equal in value to the United Nations as such, since the attainment of many of the objectives of the United Nations depended on the success of the Conference. The Conference was a unique opportunity to concentrate world efforts in stopping the deterioration of the environment and securing sustainable development.

(Mr. Al-Humaidi, Qatar)

7. In resolution 44/228, the General Assembly had reaffirmed that States had the sovereign right to exploit their own resources but that they must do so in a rational manner. It had also expressed concern about the unsustainable pattern of production and consumption in industrialized countries. The industrialized countries had major responsibility for the degradation of the environment, and their participation in the Conference must take that into account. The developing countries should participate at the Conference on an equal footing in all negotiations and at the time of decision-making.

8. It was to be hoped that the General Assembly would support the reports prepared by the Preparatory Committee and that the participants at the fourth session of that Committee would undertake to do everything possible to reach consensus. The Preparatory Committee still had many tasks to carry out but, in view of the political and technical complexity of most of the items which it had taken up, the work it had carried out so far represented significant progress in achieving a consensus on the most important issues referred to in General Assembly resolution 44/228. The success of the Conference would depend on the willingness of the international community to assist the least favoured countries in overcoming the problems that they encountered, since those problems were in turn one of the causes of environmental degradation. Agenda 21 and the Earth Charter were documents of enormous importance, and it was therefore to be hoped that the Conference would approve them. The Conference was a unique opportunity to solve the problem of securing an optimal balance between the environment and development. It was the responsibility of the international community to spare no effort for the success of the Conference.

9. Mr. PEÑALOSA (Colombia) said that, ever since the General Assembly adopted its resolution 44/228, the Group of 77 had sought to achieve a balance between environment and development with respect to the issues that would be addressed by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. However, his delegation was very concerned at the way in which negotiations had proceeded during the preparations for the Conference. On the one hand, the industrialized countries had made every effort to focus the debates on environmental issues and had almost always refused to consider development issues. On the other hand, not all countries had participated actively in the work of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, and many of the countries that had participated had been interested primarily in environmental issues. His delegation feared that the Conference would place too much emphasis on environmental issues and would not give sufficient attention to development issues, which could be a new source of frustration for the developing countries.

10. His delegation hoped that, at its next session, the Preparatory Committee would make greater progress than it had at its preceding sessions, and that a consensus would be reached on the basic issues to be included in the agenda as outlined in General Assembly resolution 44/228. It was not likely that what was not accomplished at that session of the Preparatory Committee, would be

(Mr. Peñalosa, Colombia)

achieved during the short span of the Conference. It was therefore advisable that high-level political representatives capable of taking important decisions should attend the forthcoming session of the Preparatory Committee.

11. It was not realistic to think that sustainable development could be achieved without the transfer of large amounts of resources to the developing countries. Such resources should be not only financial but also technological. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's statement regarding specific proposals that had been made on the transfer of technology. Colombia also welcomed the meeting that would be held in Tokyo in 1992. However, it was not realistic to imagine that the developing countries would be able to achieve sustainable growth solely on the basis of external resources. Major efforts would have to be made at the national level in order to modify policies, institutions and programmes in such a way as to enable Governments to implement the provisions of Agenda 21. Colombia was convinced that the developing countries would take very seriously the commitments included in Agenda 21, provided that the developed countries also did so. For that reason, his delegation was pleased that the suggestions for altering the structure of the work for the Preparatory Committee in March 1992 had been accepted. At that time, the Preparatory Committee meeting in plenary session would, from the first day until the last, concentrate on negotiations, without hearing statements or general presentations. The Preparatory Committee would have to reach consensus on institutional arrangements at the international level to facilitate the implementation by all countries of the commitments on international technical cooperation, which would be included in Agenda 21.

12. His delegation welcomed the work that had been accomplished on the draft conventions on climate change and biological diversity. It was not advisable to pressure the bodies involved in preparing those conventions to finish their work before June 1992. While that would be a very positive achievement, Colombia considered that those conventions could also be finalized after the Conference.

13. His delegation made a special appeal to all countries members of the Group of 77 to participate very actively at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee in March 1992 and to ensure that the composition of delegations reflected the importance of the debates that would be held at that meeting. Colombia also called upon all countries with the financial capacity to do so to make financial contributions with a view to facilitating the participation of all developing countries not only at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee but at the Conference itself. The heads of State or Government that would attend the Conference should be sure that it would be possible to adopt basic agreements. It would be hard for heads of State or Government to go to Rio de Janeiro without knowing for certain what would be agreed at the Conference. It was therefore essential to reach basic agreements at the meeting of the Preparatory Committee.

14. Mr. MOORE (United States of America) said that the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development offered a much-needed opportunity to forge a comprehensive strategy for environmentally sound development. In the opinion of his delegation, the principal goal of the Conference was to facilitate international cooperation through more effective programmes to protect the environment in a manner that was fully integrated with economic and development strategies. That was the essence of the concept of sustainable development, elaborated by the Brundtland Commission in its report entitled Our Common Future.

15. The successful implementation of that strategy would rest upon a foundation of broad public participation in decision-making. It would also be necessary to apply market-based mechanisms to improve economic productivity, since market-oriented systems provided the best way to obtain rapid adoption of environmentally sound technologies in a cost-effective manner.

16. The United States had been favourably impressed by the dedication and efforts of all participants at the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference. However, the task that remained to be accomplished at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee was formidable, and his delegation was strongly in favour of extending the duration of the final session to five weeks.

17. The United States remained firmly committed to the negotiation of a convention on tropical forests, since a convention on that subject was urgently needed. His delegation hoped that the Conference would reach agreement on principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests, since such principles would serve as a basis for negotiations on a global convention on forests that would provide a framework for nationally based actions. The United States welcomed the progress that had been made at the third session of the Preparatory Committee and was pleased that agreement had already been reached on the importance of global stewardship, sustainable management, education and training, integration of policies, research and inventory, and the use of market mechanisms.

18. The Conference would provide a unique opportunity for continued cooperation and consultation on oceans. Significant progress had been made in the Preparatory Committee, and there had been demonstrated willingness to find common ground for the development of principles to guide activities in that area over the next 20 years. His delegation looked forward to continued progress at the Conference on marine pollution, especially in the development of a strategy to address land-based sources of marine pollution, on integrated coastal zone management, living marine resources, and ocean data and monitoring.

19. Technological cooperation would be one of the most important matters before the Conference, since new and efficient technologies would be needed to sustain the world's economy, protect the environment and alleviate poverty and human suffering. For that, sound economic policy would be needed based on

(Mr. Moore, United States)

efficient market systems, together with an understanding by each country of its resources, capacities and needs, clarified by an assessment of the individual country's technology, a sound decision-making process and information arrangements that would make it possible to find out what was available and on what terms. The United States had put forward a comprehensive proposal along those lines during the third session of the Preparatory Committee and was gratified by the positive responses that had been received from developed and developing countries.

20. The United States had also put forward proposals aimed at strengthening the institutional structure of, and cooperation among, United Nations agencies concerned with environment and development. There should be an effective inter-agency coordinating mechanism for all elements of the United Nations system in that field. Organizations associated with the United Nations system, especially the international financial mechanisms and institutions, such as the World Bank and other multilateral development banks, should be involved in that effort, as should relevant non-governmental, voluntary and private sector organizations. The relevant agencies or organizations in the United Nations system should be strengthened or reformed, and regional or national programmes should be promoted.

21. The United Nations institutional reform should be carried out through optimal use of existing institutions and organizations and should rely on current or planned United Nations financial resources.

22. The United States also attached importance to the issue of climate change and the protection of the global climate for present and future generations. It had therefore joined in the consensus on General Assembly resolution 45/212 which had established a single intergovernmental negotiating process for the preparation of a framework convention on climate change, a process in which the United States Government was participating fully. However, the Second Committee was not an appropriate forum in wihch to address the substance of the ongoing negotiations in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. The United States welcomed the progress made by the Negotiating Committee at its first three sessions and believed that the objective of completing the negotiations before the Conference, so that the framework convention could be opened for signature during it, was achievable.

23. Mr. KUKAN (Czechoslovakia), speaking on behalf of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland, said that those countries were taking an active part in the preparation of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, which they believed could mark the end of a contradictory stage in the evolution of mankind, categorized by a remarkable development of the world economy on the one hand and a reckless plundering of natural resources and destruction of the environment on the other. In the 1990s, it would be necessary to promote growth according to the principles of sustainable development. Adapting the concept of sustainable development to international and national programmes, however, was more difficult than it had seemed in 1989 when the General Assembly had discussed the mandate of the Conference.

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

24. The fourth session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference would be crucial, since consensus had yet to be reached on a great number of issues, in particular the problems of financial resources, transfer of technology for sustainable development, the nature and substance of the Earth Charter and institutional questions. It was to be hoped that an agreement would be reached in time.

25. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland hoped that, as a result of the Conference, a series of regional and world activities would be initiated in the fields of technology transfer, protection against harmful and toxic wastes and implementation of effective programmes to reduce pollutants, the restoration of natural values, particularly in degraded areas, the development of protected areas, at the regional and transboundary level also, the development of an effective international environmental law, including procedures for the settlement of disputes in the field of environmental protection, and an international system for improving the environment in areas particularly degraded as a result of transboundary pollution.

26. In the former Soviet bloc countries, one of the negative consequences of four decades of rigid political systems with centrally planned economies had been the careless exploitation of natural resources. The task of creating a market economy, a transition which had never been attempted before in the history of mankind, was overwhelming. With the fundamental changes that had taken place in those countries, environmental issues had been given more political and social importance and public awareness had greatly increased despite the fact that it was the public that carried the burden of the transition. Nevertheless, a helpful international setting was one of the essential conditions for successfully eliminating the legacy of the last four decades, when virtually no attention had been paid to environmental issues. In short, a distinction should be made between the two principal barriers to achieving sustainable development in those countries: the first was technological and economic and the second was the overall political and social situation.

27. Despite the multiple environmental problems in Central and Eastern Europe, those countries were building their endeavours on cooperation, not on aid. They were not asking the industrialized countries to forget their commitments to the developing countries or to divert financial resources away from them. They supported any idea that could improve international cooperation in the field of environment and development and therefore supported the statement made by the Netherlands delegation during the general discussion.

28. The political changes in Central Europe and the transition from a centrally planned to a market economy had created the necessary circumstances for the environment to regain its proper importance among national priorities. However, the countries of Central Europe were facing serious difficulties in transforming current technologies into environmentally sound

(Mr. Kukan, Czechoslovakia)

ones, because of the lack of know-how and of specialized environmental management consulting firms and because of the lack of investment resources. International cooperation could greatly facilitate that task. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland would favour the introduction of an international system for facilitating technology transfer by eliminating restrictions on and barriers to international trade, and by the establishment of a system for financing transfers through loans on concessionary terms.

29. Substantial results could not be achieved through simple transfer alone. What was needed was real technological cooperation, based on bilateral and multilateral agreements to facilitate capacity and institution-building through joint ventures, joint programmes and training courses.

30. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland believed that regional cooperation in that field was essential. Their experience at the Dobris Conference on "Environment for Europe" had made them optimistic about environmental protection, for it was one of the few areas where it was possible to arrive at conclusions acceptable to all. Ministers participating in the Conference on Ecologically Sustainable Industrial Development, held in Copenhagen in October 1991, had noted with concern the environmental problems of the Central and Eastern European countries. They had also rightly noted that technology transfer was one of the keys to the adaptation and absorption of pollution prevention techniques. At a Conference of Prime Ministers of the Baltic countries, held in Ronneby, significant political impetus had been given to cooperation and protection of the Baltic Sea. Furthermore, the year 1990 had witnessed the establishment in Budapest of the Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe, which was a fine example of international cooperation in that field. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland were prepared to contribute to the successful preparations for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

31. Mr. ARRIA (Venezuela) said that, since only three months remained before the final session of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, there was no time to lose, especially since whatever was not negotiated on that occasion would be very difficult to achieve at the Conference. The preparatory process must be accelerated.

32. The developing countries accepted the concept of sustainable development and believed that putting it into practice would require resources, the transfer of technology and favourable conditions for their use. However, less headway was being made in that area than on topics that were of interest to the developing countries, such as climate change. Sustained development meant not only that immediate needs must be fulfilled without prejudice to future needs, but also that the needs of the North must be satisfied without compromising the short-term and long-term needs of the South.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

33. Referring to the central theme of the Conference - development policy with an environmental component - he said that the Conference was not a forum for scientists and researchers, but rather a forum for discussing the central theme - the quality of life on the planet, and of its people. The composition of delegations would be an indication of each country's attitude. If they were composed only of environmental and scientific experts, the discussions would proceed along those lines rather than focusing on development.

34. The document submitted by the Permanent Representative of Sweden on behalf of the Nordic countries was an extremely interesting contribution, which reflected the traditional sensitivity of those countries and their special feeling of solidarity with mankind. The South Commission, for its part, in the document entitled "Towards a Common Strategy for the South in the UNCED Negotiations and Beyond", highlighted the need for a full-scale public information campaign in order to present the South's position on the theme of environmental development in its true light, and thereby counteract the negative image being propagated about the South in that regard.

35. International society at large, with a keen awareness and an extraordinary sense of responsibility, was in the preparations for the Conference cooperating through non-governmental organizations. Many of its contributions would no doubt be incorporated in a number of resolutions. The same could be said of indigenous populations, women and youth.

36. Conditions for technology transfer from North to South having become a topic of discussion, the developed world should not forget the technological debt it had incurred towards the third world countries over the centuries. The poverty in which a large percentage of mankind still lived was clearly a constant cause of environmental degradation. The wealthy countries, too, perpetuated the process of environmental degradation, although, in their case, it was not for lack of options, but rather because of excesses in their lifestyle. Lately, much was being said about the enormous commitments of those countries towards Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and their feeling that they were less wealthy, or poorer, than before. Unfortunately, the countries of the South not only felt much poorer than before, but they really were much poorer. It should be realized that the countries of the South were not "free riders", as they had demonstrated by opening up their markets, submitting to fiscal discipline and respecting the environment. Naturally, the more powerful countries, which had done - and were doing - so much damage to the environment should not expect to participate free of charge in an effort by all of mankind: their financial contribution should be much greater than that of the countries of the South.

37. Although a great deal was expected from the Conference, it could not be expected to be the answer to the planet's problems. The Conference should prescribe ways and means of implementing the United Nations resolution on environment and development, which was the frame of reference and the framework for action.

(Mr. Arria, Venezuela)

38. Venezuela had the good fortune to possess natural resources in great quantities and geographic wealth and diversity, which it was intent on preserving. It therefore looked forward in particular to the commitments that would stem from the Earth Charter and Agenda 21. That was extremely fertile ground for a show of solidarity and cooperation. All countries shared the blame for creating the problem and they were all responsible for solving it.

39. Mr. LEV (Israel) said that threats to the environment made no distinction between nations and continents. It was not possible for each separate country, or even regions, to combat the adverse effects of human activities on the environment in isolation. A global perspective must be adopted, one from which problems could be identified and appropriate solutions found. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would have to tackle complicated and interrelated issues. Israel shared the feeling of the international community that the more interdependent environmental issues became, the more complex the topics would be. Consequently, initiatives to resolve those issues should be more ambitious and broader in scope.

40. A group of more than 100 Israeli companies were engaged in extensive research in order to develop sophisticated, innovative and export-oriented technologies. Those technologies dealt with the reduction of noise from jet planes; measures to control pollution from chemical gases and biological pollutants; the removal and purification of industrial waste from water-desalination plants; the identification of poisonous substances in water; more effective removal of oil spills in the sea; and the conversion of crop sprays into harmless substances.

41. It was Israel's intention to help implement the set of ideas and goals to be outlined at the Conference. His delegation trusted that the Conference would represent a milestone in efforts to resolve complicated environmental issues.

42. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking on behalf of the States members of the Alliance of Small Island States, said that the Alliance was a coalition of small island and low-lying coastal States at comparable levels of economic development, which were all equally vulnerable to the adverse consequences of climate change, particularly potential sea-level rise. The 36 members of the Alliance were cooperating as participants in the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change. The group included countries from the Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Caribbean, Mediterranean and South China Seas. The member States of the Alliance were developing countries and members of the Group of 77.

43. The members of the Alliance were those countries most vulnerable to the threat of sea-level rise and could literally be considered "front-line" States on the issue of global warming and other related environmental topics. They welcomed the interest shown by developed countries and developing countries alike in the physical and cultural survival of small island and low-lying coastal States.

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

44. Although the countries of the Alliance would probably be the first to be affected by global warming, the danger was common to all human beings. No country was large enough or wealthy enough to escape the adverse consequences of climate change. Since the most disturbing type of climate change was that caused by human activities, he was gratified to note the universal participation in the negotiation processes and the mobilization of world opinion on such problems.

45. The Conference to be held in Brazil in June 1992 should be seen as the beginning of a new stage in an ongoing process rather than as the end of that process. He urged all those who could do so to respond positively by making contributions to ensure the participation of all developing countries in the parallel negotiating processes. The representation of developing countries should be substantive rather than symbolic. Since the negotiations would be very complex, one-member delegations would not be able to participate effectively. He welcomed the plan to convene consecutive meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference at United Nations Headquarters, which would allow developing countries to participate more fully in the process. He supported the parallel negotiation processes and hoped that they would be provided with adequate resources. The countries of the Alliance would continue to work diligently in both negotiating processes.

46. Mr. KABIR (Bangladesh) said that the time that remained for the completion of all preparations for the Rio Summit - barely six months - was critically important. The Preparatory Committee's adoption of Agenda 21 at its latest session in Geneva was therefore a significant achievement.

47. However, at its next meeting, which would take place in New York, the Preparatory Committee must continue its work on the Earth Charter. The pace of the negotiations would have to be accelerated if agreement was to be reached on concrete action plans for sectoral and global issues. Bangladesh felt that all the recommendations sent to Rio should fully integrate the environmental and developmental concerns of developing countries. The need to achieve such integration was the central component of General Assembly resolution 44/228. However, it would remain an elusive goal unless due importance was given to such cross-sectoral issues as the need for additional financial resources, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries and crucial institutional concerns. Progress on those issues had been extremely slow. He trusted that the question of resources would receive high priority in negotiations in the coming months. In that regard, he recalled that, in its decision 3/4, the Preparatory Committee had requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to provide concrete proposals based on cost evaluations for the implementation of each programme area of Agenda 21.

48. It was necessary to go beyond the achievements of the last session of the Preparatory Committee and to work seriously to reach final agreement on all critical aspects of the important question of resources.

(Mr. Kabir, Bangladesh)

49. Bangladesh also shared the concern of other delegations at the slow progress of the Preparatory Committee's work on institutional issues. The Preparatory Committee had been unable to reconcile important differences of opinion on the issue, and the pace of negotiations should therefore be accelerated. He shared the Secretary-General's view that the Preparatory Committee's recommendations should take into account not only the international dimension of the issue but also the regional, subregional, national and local dimensions. Moreover, institutional improvements should be made through strengthened multilateral cooperation. Such improvements should promote a genuine partnership among Governments and peoples. Countries should therefore refrain from imposing unilateral conditions and should adopt measures to meet the critical needs of all, particularly those whose needs were most acute. Bangladesh was participating actively in the negotiations to finalize the framework convention on climate change, and was equally interested in the early finalization of the convention on biological diversity. He hoped that those conventions would be open for signature during the Rio Summit. He also hoped that agreement would be reached on a supplementary set of principles for future negotiations and on the necessary additional protocols.

50. The success of those exercises and of the Rio Conference itself would depend on the full participation of developing countries in the process. He was therefore concerned about the lack of resources, especially to meet the costs of participation of representatives from developing countries.

51. The 1992 Earth Summit would provide a unique opportunity to launch a programme of action in the area of environment and development. It would also allow delegations to draw up fundamental guidelines that would be effective well into the twenty-first century. The end of the cold war had given the world a chance to address those challenges through greater interaction and strengthened cooperation among nations. The real test of the Rio Summit would be whether it could forge a partnership that would secure the common future of humanity.

52. Mr. GUERRERO (Philippines) recalled that, at one time, the Philippines had formed part of the Asian continent, but that the melting of the ice of centuries had left the land fragmented into 7,000 islands. The moral of that story was that the deluge could happen again. Indeed, natural disasters had struck many places, desertification was increasing and the planet was being despoiled and degraded by man's greed or need.

53. The Secretary-General, in his 1990 report on the work of the Organization, had said that mankind must either protect nature and survive or destroy nature and perish. Studies had confirmed that ominous warning, and environmentalists had pointed out what was abundantly clear: that there would be rapid extinction of life, including man's, unless all men cooperated.

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

54. In the Committee, sovereign States had expressed their willingness to cooperate to finalize the negotiations on biological diversity and climate change and to prepare for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The Philippines believed it was necessary to be aware, from the outset, of a common international objective: to ensure, for current and future generations, a quality of life which improved instead of deteriorating. It was therefore necessary to agree on a few basic principles: first, that man enjoyed primacy in the hierarchy of creation and that nature was in his service. Thus, the need for man to protect and preserve nature did not mean that nature was more important than man. Second, every man had an inalienable right to life, and thus a right to a life-enhancing, rather than life-destroying, natural environment. Third, every man deserved an improved quality of life, for which the environment was important because it was a means of fulfilling that aspiration. Fourth, all generations had a right to development, which meant that current needs must be met without sacrificing the satisfaction of future needs. Fifth, every State had the right to use its natural resources for the welfare of its people and a responsibility to protect the environment, not only for its own people, but also for all others, though that did not mean it must surrender its national heritage to a global public domain. Lastly, all peoples must cooperate in protecting the environment, but not at the expense of development, particularly that of the developing countries. Many of those principles were included, either implicitly or explicitly, in General Assembly resolutions 44/227 and 44/228.

55. The objective must be to elaborate an agenda for the control of environmental deterioration and the repair of the damage inflicted on nature, and also for ensuring development for current and future generations. Such an agenda should underscore the pressing need for an international economic climate which sustained the economic growth and development of developing countries; the cause-and-effect relationship between environmental concerns and other problems faced by developing countries, such as poverty, external debt, negative resource flows, severe structural adjustment measures, subsidies and protectionism, inadequate access to markets and deteriorating terms of trade; the critical need for funding for development, which should preclude the imposition of new forms of conditionality on the basis of environmental concerns; and the significant role of the transfer of technology on concessional and preferential terms.

56. Developing countries faced severe constraints that prevented them from achieving sustainable and environmentally sound development; poverty contributed to environmental degradation, and was in turn exacerbated by it. They could not solve their problems through economic and social programmes because a large portion of their already meagre resources was needed to service debt obligations. The Philippines, for example, had to allocate about 45 per cent of the national budget to debt servicing, while attempting at the same time to meet the basic needs of more than 60 million people. Achieving the goal of protecting and safeguarding the environment without inhibiting

(Mr. Guerrero, Philippines)

economic growth required a programme which was comprehensive, addressing the entire range of critical issues concerning the relationship between the environment and development; universal, involving all countries, developed or developing, continental or insular, land-locked or coastal, in addition to private enterprises and non-governmental organizations; equitable, recognizing the special responsibility incumbent on those causing the greatest environmental degradation through their production and consumption patterns; flexible, providing for appropriate adjustments in response to new knowledge and changing circumstances; and prudent, providing balanced representation for the settlement of disputes.

57. The declarations or instruments adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development should permit mankind to rectify past errors and make a covenant with nature, which was not only an exhilarating political experience but also a categorical moral imperative for survival.

58. Ms. WILLBERG (New Zealand) said she wished to refer to two particular aspects of the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. First, New Zealand shared the belief that the General Assembly should not be involved in substantive debate on those issues currently being considered within the framework of Conference preparations, since that would unnecessarily duplicate efforts and lead to confusion. None the less, it was important to acknowledge the indissoluble bond among the various environmental issues and the need for each country to develop a corresponding political perspective in order to invoke the political will necessary for the success of the Conference. To help nurture that political will, the General Assembly could and should call upon the leaders of every Member State to confirm their commitment to the Rio Conference. Second, the objective of sustainable development and environmental accountability could not be attained by using mercantile approaches to international negotiations. A larger vision was needed; trust and equity in the negotiating process were indispensable.

59. Negotiations relating to environmental protection and the promotion of sustainable development differed from other negotiations because every country, developed or developing, wanted or needed something. Every country had a different priority and degree of interest with regard to each separate issue. Thus, all the participants had to recognize that disparity of interests and prepare their negotiating positions accordingly. While the Preparatory Committee had already completed three sessions, it was still not certain that the necessary political will existed to address the various questions: much of the debate was going on in other forums, such as the GATT negotiations on trade liberalization and the debt relief negotiations at the International Monetary Fund and the Paris Club. An overall political perspective at both the national and multilateral levels was therefore a vital part of the Conference preparations. In that connection, it was extremely important that the Preparatory Committee's fourth session, including documentation and administrative tasks, should be well-organized.

(Ms. Willberg, New Zealand)

60. There was no doubt that providing additional resources and granting favourable access to technologies were central to sustainable development and environmental responsibility. The estimated cost of Agenda 21 activities would give a clear picture of the financial needs of the undertaking. Of equal importance was the global policy under which environmental improvement and sustainable development would be pursued; in that regard, the primary responsibility rested with the major economic actors, namely the Group of Seven. It might be asked whether the members of that group were willing to decide at the Uruguay Round negotiations on a trade system based on comparative advantage, adopt a more expedient and comprehensive approach to debt relief in the context of the Paris Club and the Bretton Woods institutions, and accept global targets or national objectives aimed at reducing the inequitable consumption of global resources and creation of environmental hazards.

61. There was a danger that the Preparatory Committee session and the Conference itself might become so preoccupied with the question of providing additional resources that they would turn into pledging conferences, losing sight of the critical issue of determining international policy. Some might not be concerned by the lack of emphasis on liberalizing trade, increasing debt relief and reducing national energy consumption; however, such a trend would be self-defeating for the Conference. Accordingly, it was important to weigh the clear need for additional resources against the compelling need to restructure international cooperation so that a comprehensive and balanced programme for the Conference could be formulated.

62. Her delegation felt that the broadest possible participation of non-governmental organizations, including indigenous groups, at the next Preparatory Committee session and at the Conference was essential for a satisfactory outcome. The importance of the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, established to prepare a framework convention on climate change, could not be overemphasized; she hoped that a text would be ready for signature by the time of the Conference. While it must be recognized that the Committee's work was made more difficult by the diversity of national interests, the international community had to be able to resolve a situation which could fundamentally alter the Earth's climate and exacerbate many current difficulties. Island countries of the Pacific, for example, would have enormous adjustments to make if the hypotheses proposed by the international scientific community were confirmed; in the worst case, some of those countries would no longer be habitable. New Zealand believed that the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, in December, must produce an integrated draft text with firm commitments to targets and timetables for dealing with greenhouse gas emissions and to the need for effective concerted action with regard to financial assistance and technological cooperation. The General Assembly could and should urge the Committee to act accordingly; the aim of any draft resolution on climate change considered by the Second Committee should be to bring about an early conclusion of a framework convention on the matter.

63. Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia) said that the Preparatory Committee's third session had been characterized by success in some areas; however, progress in other matters, especially those of vital interest to the developing countries, was far from satisfactory. Although 55 decisions had been adopted, much remained to be done in relation to the Earth Charter, Agenda 21 and institutional arrangements. There was also a sense of frustration because the developed countries had laid greater stress on matters reflecting their own interests, such as environmental protection, and had paid less attention to issues of interest to developing countries, such as development. During the third session, the developed countries had been hesitant to discuss proposals by the developing countries concerning new and additional financial resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology. Indonesia was convinced that unless participants reached genuine agreement on all those issues, based on the provisions of General Assembly resolution 44/228, the success of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development would be in jeopardy. True international cooperation was needed to resolve the issues under Agenda 21 successfully.

64. The central concept that environmental protection should not be undertaken at the expense of development should be strictly respected. Accordingly, natural resources in the developing countries could not be considered as the property of all while developed countries persisted in maintaining unsustainable consumption patterns. Moreover, the South should not shoulder the entire burden of protecting the environment; the responsibility should be shared on an equitable basis. Of particular importance to Indonesia was the issue of tropical forests, which in its case represented substantial natural wealth. His country recognized the need for preserving the biological diversity of flora and fauna and for conserving the ecological sinks or biomass needed to absorb such gases as carbon dioxide. Nevertheless, as a developing country with a sizeable population, Indonesia's primary objective was to accelerate development. Thus those competing demands had to be dealt with so that both development programmes and ecological systems could be maintained. His country had taken major steps towards achieving that dynamic balance; however, its success would depend in good measure on international cooperation. In that context, the developing countries were faced with a major contradiction. Seeing how the developing countries had totally depleted their forests, destroying them for the purposes of development, developing countries wondered why they had to forgo the benefits of exploiting their own forest resources. Were they supposed to subsidize the developed countries for their past mistakes. To ensure sustainable management of tropical forests and preservation of biological diversity for the benefit of all, North and South had to share the responsibility and cooperate. Those considerations should be kept in mind at the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee.

65. Indonesia attached great importance to the successful conclusion of the work of the Preparatory Committee in order to secure a balanced outcome of UNCED 1992. It would participate in those negotiations with an open mind and flexibility without, however, neglecting its vital concerns and interests.

(Mr. Sutresna, Indonesia)

Environment problems could not be isolated from the general framework of development and must be viewed as an integral part of it. The international community must, therefore, seriously address the development requirements of the developing countries. In that respect, Indonesia was pleased with the joint German-Indonesian statement on cooperation on environmental protection (A/46/308) in which both countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in pursuit of sustainable development.

66. The UNCED negotiation process should not become a new source of North-South confrontation. Rather, it should be a forum where all countries established a programme for resolving equitably the questions of environment and development. It was important to ensure that the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 were based on the principles embodied in General Assembly resolution 44/228 and other relevant resolutions. Likewise, the Conference must also reflect the outcome of meetings of developing countries, such as the Beijing Ministerial Declaration on Environment and Development. All countries should attach great importance to the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee. His delegation welcomed the initiatives by some delegations to hold informal meetings to exchange views on some issues in order to facilitate negotiations at the session.

67. Mr. ANDRADE (Guatemala), speaking on behalf of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, said that attendance by Central American countries at the sessions of the Preparatory Committee had been limited due not to lack of interest, but to budgetary restrictions imposed by their economic situation. They were, however, concerned by the lack of results obtained. The environment was an issue of fundamental importance to the survival of the Earth, and greater political will on the part of all Member States was essential in order to achieve the goals established.

68. Since 80 per cent of the world's population lived in developing countries, it was essential to formulate appropriate strategies for economic growth and social development under conditions of equality, security, well-being and independence. It was unacceptable that UNCED should impose obligatory unilateral measures required by the industrialized countries, which, to some extent, had achieved their development at the expense of global environmental degradation. It would also be unacceptable if commitments made at the Conference had to be respected only by the developing countries, while the developed nations refrained from supporting the overall development process.

69. The Central American countries were aware of the need to preserve the environment and had the political will to do so, as had been demonstrated by the fact that, at their summit meetings, the Presidents of those countries had pledged to protect the environment. Each country in the subregion had established a national commission which was cooperating closely with the Central American Commission on the Environment. Both national and subregional strategies and the Special Plan of Economic Cooperation for Central America

(Mr. Andrade, Guatemala)

provided environmental protection and improvement measures. The Central American countries had participated actively in the meeting held in Mexico which had adopted the Tlatelolco Declaration containing the Latin American and Caribbean Strategy for Environment and Development. Those countries had begun debt for nature programmes, whose advantages or limitations would have to be evaluated to determine their appropriateness. A programme called "the Mayan Road" had also been elaborated in cooperation with UNESCO, designed to protect the environment and promote ecology-conscious tourism. All those programmes would require sufficient resources to promote progress in that vital area.

70. Central America was part of one of the world's tropical regions, whose forests, extremely rich in biological diversity, helped ensure survival on the Earth. However, that service went unnoticed when it came time for payment of external debt. There was no acknowledgement of the debt owed by the developed countries to all less-developed countries which, because of their forest areas, generated the oxygen necessary to human survival, a service which should be compensated in a just and equitable manner.

71. Adequate environmental protection required international cooperation and solidarity, and Guatemala supported the position of the Chairman of the Group of 77. It was intolerable that 20 per cent of the world's population should live in luxury while the rest of the world barely survived. On the other hand, no attempt should be made to replace indigenous cultures; rather, they should be given access to education to raise awareness of the need to protect the environment and access to a standard of living allowing dignity. Promotion of education for women and children was essential, and women must also have access to decision-making in their societies, since they bore the major reponsibility for the quality of family life. He wondered how it would be possible to convince rural people to stop cutting trees or clearing fields if they could not be guaranteed an adequate income to allow them to survive and raise their standard of living.

72. Agenda 21 was of critical importance because the strategy for the next century must be broad and include development guidelines, mechanisms, modalities and priorities as well as assigning responsibility, including financial, and the need for transfer of environmentally sound technology. Guatemala was concerned, however, that such technology would be inadequate, limited or inaccessible because of its cost.

73. With regard to human resource development, in order to improve national capacity in environmental and ecosystem protection, indigenous populations must become educated and trained to utilize their natural resources rationally and responsibly. So-called shared responsibility among developed and developing countries for environmental protection must still be defined. The responsibility of developing countries lay in avoiding repetition of the mistakes of the industrialized countries, which owed their wealth in good measure to indiscriminate exploitation of the environment. The developed countries should allow free access to their markets, eliminate protectionists

(Mr. Andrade, Guatemala)

measures and pay fair prices for the products of developing countries. They were not asking for handouts, but demanding what rightfully was their due.

74. The importance of promoting and stimulating cooperation among developing countries to arrive at their own solutions to their problems must also be emphasized. Those countries must assume historical responsibility for their future and invest their resources in rational and productive ways to benefit their people.

75. In Central America, political independence had been affected in recent years by civil wars, which had plunged them into deepening poverty. Due to structural adjustment programmes, social sacrifices had been enormous, with budget reductions in education, health, social service and environmental sanitation. Currently, Latin America and the Caribbean were threatened by a new cholera outbreak, and the entire world was being attacked by a series of epidemics. Economic indicators had declined to the levels they had been at 20 years earlier. The challenge of integral development must be faced, and the natural heritage protected and preserved, without sacrificing the human being.

76. Mr. GONZALEZ (Chile) said that some of the issues being addressed at the current session traditionally gave rise to confrontation. However, environmental problems were an exception because they demonstrated more than any other area the interdependence of the contemporary world and the need for common efforts to achieve adequate solutions. Air and water contamination, climate change, ecosystem imbalance and natural resource depletion were a global threat, highlighting the common interests of the international community.

77. It was undeniable that the world was experiencing environmental degradation, and that, unless swift and effective action was taken, the future looked bleak. The growing interest in the issue was a positive and encouraging sign. Nevertheless, for developing countries the situation had special characteristics.

78. Chile welcomed and supported the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. In order to make the Conference a success, the international community would have to reach agreement on many issues. A particularly important issue was that of additional financing, which would be needed for implementing the decisions of the Conference. Moreover, the issue of the dimensions of development should be further strengthened. The work of the Preparatory Committee on both those issues left much to be desired, and his delegation hoped that the Preparatory Committee would adopt clear criteria at its next session.

79. Chile had participated actively in the preparatory process, to which it attached great importance. That process should be a harbinger of the new international order that should be established for the benefit of all. The

(Mr. Gonzalez, Chile)

environment was an area of common interest in which it could be demonstrated that, with new concepts and renewed political will, the well-being of all people could be improved. The Conference should therefore take measures that would make development and the preservation of the environment compatible, since both development and a sound environment were essential for the survival of the planet.

80. Environmental degradation should not prevent developing countries from exploiting their natural resources and maintaining their industries. Poorly transplanted technologies and the plundering of marine and land resources had awakened an environmental awareness that could perpetuate the current state of underdevelopment. The exploitation of developing countries' resources had been of no direct benefit to their peoples. It was therefore not fair to impose arbitrary limits on the developing countries. Those who had the capacity should develop appropriate technologies to preserve the environment and promote the transfer of those technologies on the basis of international cooperation.

81. It was essential to reach agreement on integrated policies on commodities, in particular policies aimed at increasing prices. Worsening terms of trade had led to the indiscriminate exploitation of those resources in order to maintain purchasing power through increased production. While environmental problems were of concern to all countries, it was necessary to identify measures that could be applied by each individual country according to its level of industrialization. Moreover, greater efforts should be made to solve the most pressing problems.

82. Although the concept of sustainable development was relatively new, it was becoming more important every day. It was necessary to continue to refine that concept and adopt agreements that would facilitate its implementation. Environmental agreements must be balanced by the international community's commitments to support overall development. All those activities would require considerable resources, and Chile commended the Secretary-General's efforts and the progress that had been made in that area. Thanks to the spirit of harmony that characterized the new international political climate, agreements could be reached that would allow countries to attain higher levels of development without further damaging the ecosystem.

83. Mr. CAMILLERI (Malta) said that the preparatory process for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development had reached its final and most important stage. The international community should define a set of principles and a long-term programme of action that would make it possible to halt and reverse environmental degradation and, at the same time, promote the development of the developing countries.

84. The Chairman of the Group of 77 had already mentioned the basic principles that should guide the developing countries in the negotiations leading up to the 1992 Conference. The signing of a framework convention on

(Mr. Camilleri, Malta)

climate change would be one of the principal results of the Conference. Three years ago, his delegation had brought that issue to the attention of the General Assembly. Two years later, the Assembly had agreed on the need to prepare a framework convention, as well as the necessary legal instruments to address the threat that climate change posed to the world's prosperity and development. In his report on the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (A/46/602), the Secretary-General outlined the specific requirements that must be met in order for that important process to be completed on time. Malta hoped that, in the resolution that it would adopt on that issue, the Assembly would take the necessary steps to ensure that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee received the resources it required to complete its work.

85. Climate change did not respect geographical or national frontiers. Small island States were particularly apprehensive about the threat that climate change and its effect on oceans, including the prospect of a sea-level rise in the next few decades, posed to their existence. For that reason, they attached particular importance to the inclusion in the Convention of adequate provisions on the role of oceans in climate change, in particular the need to protect oceans from becoming sewers and the need for adequate management of marine resources.

86. In July 1991, an international meeting of scientific and technical experts on climate change and oceans had been held in Malta. The meeting had considered measures that States should take to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, and had recommended that the framework convention on climate change should call upon States to cooperate in order to promote studies and encourage the exchange of information on the role of oceans in climate change. The role of scientific research in making precise projections had been raised in most of the debates on climate change and on the protection of the environment as a whole. His delegation supported the approach based on the principle of prevention. Although projections were not completely accurate, they were an indication of disturbing trends. Malta considered that the technology needed to halt the clearly identified negative trends, was already available.

87. The issue of technology raised the even more important question of responsibility. The principle of equitable but differentiated responsibility was self-evident, as was the right of all peoples to development. In the past, development had often been achieved at disastrous costs to the environment. That had made it possible to make technological advances that could be of use to countries just beginning their development process, and could help them avoid the errors of the past. Countries that had reached a high level of development had a twofold responsibility: to provide other countries with the technology they possessed and to adapt their patterns of consumption and production to current realities and technologies.

88. A number of speakers had graphically described the alternatives offered to humanity by horizontal competition among societies, which favoured the

(Mr. Camilleri, Malta)

legitimate satisfaction of basic needs over wasteful patterns of consumption. However, in addition to horizontal competition among societies, there was also vertical competition between generations; that case illustrated the sharp contrast between the still rich planet of the current generation and the desert that might be bequeathed to the next generation. In the light of that prospect, Malta had proposed that the Earth Charter should include a provision stating that each generation had the responsibility of guaranteeing that, in all national or international forums at which a decision might be taken that could affect the interest of future generations, an officially designated person should act as "guardian". That had also prompted the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Malta to propose, at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, that the Trusteeship Council, in addition to its function under the Charter of the United Nations, should act as a depositary of mankind's common heritage, which included the environment, the protection of extraterritorial zones, marine resources, the seabed and the rights of future generations.

89. Mr. MAMFOUMBI (Gabon), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, requested an extension of the deadline for the submission of drafts under agenda item 12. Three draft resolutions would be submitted under that item; they dealt with the Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar, the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1991-2000) and the Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. Those items had been dealt with, respectively, in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/74, 1991/81 and 1991/83.

90. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly

FORTY-SIXTH SESSION

Official Records

SECOND COMMITTEE
47th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 19 November 1991
at 6 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 47th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. BURKE (Ireland)

later: Mr. BARAC (Romania)
(Vice-Chairman)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/46/48, A/46/86-S/22226, A/46/264, 293, 308, 315, 336, 344, 423, 501/Rev.1, 520, 598; A/C.2/46/4)

AGENDA ITEM 79: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (continued) (A/46/264, 273, A/46/283-E/1991/114, A/46/336, 344, 345, 501/Rev.1, 520, 598, 602)

1. Mr. SEZAKI (Japan), stressed the importance his Government attached to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and the work being done in preparation for it. With only one session of the Preparatory Committee remaining, it should streamline its work, focus attention on the most pressing issues and make every effort to reach agreement. His Government was particularly interested in the ongoing negotiations on a framework convention on climate change, a convention on biological diversity and an agreement on forests, all of which, it hoped, would be completed in time for the Conference.

2. With regard to cross-sectoral issues, his delegation was fully aware of the high priority which the developing countries, in particular, accorded to the question of financial resources and transfer of technology; steady progress on those issues had been achieved at the sessions held so far, and at its last session the Preparatory Committee should make an effort to fill the gaps by identifying the real needs of developing countries and devising practical means of meeting requirements. That work would be facilitated by a commitment to environmental protection on the part of developing countries.

3. In that connection, his delegation noted that the Global Environment Facility had become a focus of attention, raising expectations within the donor community but giving rise to some reservations among developing countries. Careful study should be given to that institution's function as a financing mechanism, taking into account the possibility that its system of governance, scope of activity and management policies would evolve in time.

4. With regard to the costing exercise that the Preparatory Committee had requested the Secretariat to undertake, he noted that in his statement at the Committee's 43rd meeting the Secretary-General of the Conference had indicated that the figures to be presented would not be complete but would be in the nature of an estimate. His delegation nevertheless greatly hoped that agreement would be reached on those issues and, to that end, would participate actively in the debate.

5. The issue of institutions did not, in his view, fall solely within the province of the Preparatory Committee, but was a matter which, in view of its relevance to the entire United Nations and to the ongoing restructuring and revitalization of the Organization's economic and social sector, the Committee could address under the cluster of items currently under consideration.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Although the views expressed in the Preparatory Committee had been of a preliminary nature, a measure of agreement had been reached on a number of important points, including the need for effective utilization of existing mechanisms as against the establishment of a new institution, the importance of coordination among intergovernmental organizations and secretariats, the relevance of the issue to the ongoing process of restructuring and revitalizing the economic and social sector, and the need to take into account other results of the preparations for the Conference. His delegation considered that, although the issue of institutions was a complex one, consensus might be reached by adopting a practical approach and building upon those points of agreement.

6. As for the Earth Charter, his delegation favoured a clear and concise document setting forth key principles and general rights and obligations.

7. With regard to Agenda 21, he strongly felt that the Preparatory Committee should not produce a bulky and detailed document but, rather, should endeavour to reach agreement on a truly action-oriented programme which could easily be translated into government policies and private-sector initiatives. Proposals such as that appearing in the section on the protection of oceans and seas, which would establish a new regime defining the rights and obligations of States in very precise terms, gave grounds for concern. His delegation wondered whether such attempts were consistent with the basic aim of Agenda 21 and feared that they might add to the difficulty of the tasks still to be carried out in the very limited time-frame of the fourth preparatory session.

8. With regard to the relationship between the environment and development, his delegation, too, recognized how important the development of developing countries was to the promotion of environmental protection. At the same time, he felt that, when considered in relation to development, the goal was potentially a divisive one. Apportioning blame would be a futile exercise; a better course would be to consider ways of improving a situation in which unsustainable production and consumption patterns in affluent societies, on the one hand, and environmentally insensitive development and absolute poverty in less privileged countries, on the other, were both damaging the environment.

9. Against that background, his country had committed itself to playing an active role in development assistance, with particular emphasis on the environmental field. Recalling the announcement made by his Government at the Arche Summit Meeting held in Paris in July 1989 that it would expand its development assistance in the field of the environment to 300 billion Japanese yen, or $US 2.3 billion, for a three-year period beginning in 1989, he stated that in only two years Japan had almost achieved that goal.

10. The aim of the preparatory process being to integrate the cooperation extended at all levels by Governments and private sectors, his delegation noted with interest the growing number of events and programmes, several of them stemming from the preparatory meetings, designed to promote that goal.

(Mr. Sezaki, Japan)

Those relating to his country included an environmental congress for Asia and the Pacific held in Tokyo on 4 and 5 July 1991, which had adopted a Declaration putting forward a number of proposals for action for consideration by the Conference, as well as the convening of a high-level group of financial and policy leaders scheduled to meet in Tokyo in April 1992 to discuss financial issues relating to the Conference. The latter meeting, to which the Secretary-General of the Conference had also referred in his statement, was not a governmental undertaking.

11. Mr. MONGBE (Benin), referring first to the Preparatory Committee's report on its third session (A/46/48, vol. II), noted that the Preparatory Committee had adopted by consensus a draft agenda for the 1992 Conference; that decision was, however, open to review at the Preparatory Committee's fourth session in the light of decisions taken at the current session of the General Assembly. His delegation was concerned as to whether the Preparatory Committee would succeed in defining the needs of developing countries for financial resources and technology to enable them to incorporate ecological considerations in their development policies, or in agreeing upon how those needs could best be met. So far, the Preparatory Committee had failed to arrive at a precise definition of the developing countries' needs in that field, despite their efforts to explain their problems and make proposals.

12. However, his delegation remained optimistic: in its decision on the structure and organization of Agenda 21, the Committee had undertaken to take into account the need to differentiate between the responsibilities of developing countries and those of industrialized countries. The decision also included a new chapter on means of implementation which were to enable developing countries to achieve the objectives of Agenda 21. His delegation greatly hoped that the ambiguities still hanging over the financial resources issue would be dispelled before the Preparatory Committee's fourth session, with a view to attaining a consensus acceptable to all parties.

13. The question of transfer of technology was as important as that of new and additional financial resources. His delegation hoped that the Conference would go beyond adopting the principle of transfer of technology on concessional or preferential terms to elaborate an international economic and ecological policy favourable to the promotion of transfer of technology and to the capacity and means of developing countries to adapt transferred technology to their requirements. A major challenge of the preparatory process was to develop such a strategy for the transfer of sustainable and environmentally sound technologies. Access to such technologies should be made available on a non-commercial basis and should be accompanied by measures designed to strengthen the recipient countries' capacities for their utilization.

14. Referring to the second African regional ministerial conference held at Abidjan from 11 to 14 November 1991 in preparation for the 1992 Conference, he said that the conference had adopted a Declaration, a common African position on environment and development, and resolutions relative to the preparations

(Mr. Mongbe, Benin)

for the 1992 Conference and to African participation in negotiations on the conventions on climate change and biological diversity. In addition, an African programme of action on environment and development was in preparation and would be forwarded to the Conference secretariat by 30 December 1991. After acquainting the Committee briefly with the contents of those documents, he said that the conference had attached particular importance to establishing institutional and other mechanisms to guarantee the implementation of Agenda 21, and had also recommended the maintenance of the headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Africa and the strengthening of the UNEP Regional Office for Africa as a means of supporting the environmental programmes of African States. Lastly, he expressed his delegation's support for the idea of establishing an international fund for financing sustained development in Africa.

15. Turning to item 79, he remarked that the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on a framework convention on climate change showed a tendency to focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions rather than on developing the capacity to absorb such emissions. It was a well-known fact, however, that tropical and subtropical deforestation had considerably reduced the capacity of nature to absorb carbon dioxide. Negotiations on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions should, inter alia, cover the question of reforestation of such areas. His delegation hoped that the first provisions of the framework convention would be completed at the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee's fourth session, to be held at Geneva in December 1991.

16. He called upon all countries participating in the Conference, and especially the wealthier ones, to make firm undertakings to implement the decisions to be adopted by the Conference. A consensus should not represent the triumph of the ideas of a particular group of States or of one hemisphere but should be the result of a common political will to save the planet from an ecological catastrophe.

17. Ms. FRITSCHE (Liechtenstein) said that the draft agenda for the Conference adopted by the Preparatory Committee signalled the participants' readiness not only to reach common agreement but also to join in a common commitment to take the necessary action. Her Government viewed the Conference as offering the possibility of changing the course of environmental policy to incorporate development concerns. The partnership which had to be established between ecology and economics should involve the identification of mutual obligations, respect for the concerns of others and, where necessary, compensation. Application of the most appropriate production technologies and environmentally sound techniques for the disposal of used goods were of the highest importance. Environmental education, pricing incentives and the incorporation of environmental costs in the price of goods were essential measures alongside the consequential application of the "polluter pays" principle, the principle of precautionary and preventive action and the principle of cooperation.

(Ms. Fritsche, Liechtenstein)

18. Her Government attributed the greatest importance to the implementation of international conventions in the field of environmental protection, and commended the efforts to finalize a framework convention on climate change and a convention on biological diversity. It was also prepared to make its contribution to common efforts to support the developing countries in their pursuit of sustainable development. It welcomed clear arrangements in respect of all supporting measures, whether institutional or financial, in the field of environment and development.

19. Her delegation welcomed the Preparatory Committee's recommendation that the Conference should address key elements relating to women's critical economic, social and environmental contributions to sustainable development. Women had traditionally been to a large extent excluded from policy formulation relating to human settlements. Discrimination prevented many women in both the North and the South from having access to housing, mortgages and land ownership. Households closely reflected the conditions of the surrounding physical environment, and it was women who bore the main responsibility for protecting their families from pollution, poor sanitation and poor housing conditions. Women also faced the greatest risk from handling contaminated products within the household. Moreover, recent experience had shown that it was mostly women and children who sought refuge from environmentally degraded areas. Improvement of the environment and of human settlements for women was ultimately linked to improving the overall status of women and their participation in social and economic development, including education, access to health services and management, and decision-making roles in all policy sectors.

20. In conclusion, she said that the Conference should undertake a review of incentives and penalties with a view to changing the economic behaviour of individuals and corporations, and should also address non-economic factors such as the cultural, social and ethical values motivating human behaviour. The fundamental changes which had to be wrought would affect every sector of industry, and the movement towards more environmentally sound and sustainable economic behaviour would change lifestyles the world over.

21. Mrs. MASRAINAH (Brunei Darussalam) stressed the importance of achieving a proper balance between environmental protection and economic priorities. The Conference should give special attention to the development needs of the developing countries which, in ensuring that environmental concerns were made part of their development plans, had also to respond to the needs of their people in terms of economic growth. The developing countries needed access to financial resources, technical assistance and technology to assist them in their efforts towards both economic development and environmental protection. Developed countries had to play their part in that process, and responsibilities had to be equitably shared.

22. It was to be hoped that the gathering of world leaders at the Conference would result in the necessary consensus and political commitment, thus

(Mrs. Masrainah, Brunei Darussalam)

enabling the world community to address any conflict of interests and concerns that might arise between the developed and the developing world. A balanced perspective was of the essence, as was the recognition of the sovereign right of any nation to utilize its resources for the benefit of its people.

23. Mr. EFTYCHIOU (Cyprus) said that, despite the recommendations adopted in 1972 at the first United Nations Conference on the Environment, and the great expectations created then, the global environmental situation had deteriorated. The question now was whether the absolute necessity of concerted action to safeguard the future of mankind had been recognized or whether, in another 20 years' time, there would have to be yet another international gathering to see what had gone wrong.

24. The evolution of the situation since 1972 showed what could happen in a world of unregulated exploitation of the environment. Although the industrialized countries and even some developing countries had prospered, the vast majority of the world's population had remained in absolute poverty. The disproportionate distribution of the world's wealth mirrored patterns of consumption and pollution that far exceeded the capacity of nature to cope with them. At the same time, poverty and the absence of sustainable development in the third world had degraded human and natural resources while constantly eroding environmental assets.

25. Whether environmental degradation was due to overindulgence or to efforts simply to survive, the result was the same, and the price for ignoring it would be paid by rich and poor alike. The poor, who had less to lose, must be made, through practical measures, to understand that they too had a stake in the future and could look forward to development and prosperity. That was the most important message that could emerge from the 1992 Conference. The Conference should be the culmination of a determined effort to solve the problem of a deteriorating world environment by tackling its root causes and initiating measures that would promote sustainable development for all.

26. To achieve those objectives, it was important for all the parties involved to be brought together to cooperate in offering their respective expertise and resources to achieve the common goal. It was also important to recognize, identify and evaluate all the issues involved and to set the right priorities. In his delegation's view, those priorities were: reviving growth, in particular in the developing world; merging environmental and economic concerns at all levels of decision-making; finding less energy-intensive patterns of growth; meeting the essential needs of the developing world's expanding population while working to stabilize it at a sustainable level; devising alternative means of production and consumption; reorienting technologies to meet the new challenges and, of course, making those technologies accessible to all. Those broad headings covered numerous specific problems that would also have to be tackled during and after the Conference. In connection with the revival of growth, for example, such problems as foreign debt and trade barriers could not be ignored. A wide range of environmental problems would also have to be addressed.

(Mr. Eftychiou, Cyprus)

27. There was increasing awareness in Cyprus that sustainable development was the only correct approach to improving the quality of life without degrading the environment. Special efforts were being made to avoid the mistakes of the past and new legislation had been introduced. Sustainable development had become the central concept of the country's 1989-1993 development plan. The plan implied managing the natural environment in a way that ensured the conservation of the country's ecosystems and natural resources by implementing technically sound, economically viable and socially acceptable programmes. Measures to achieve those policy objectives included environmental planning, pollution control, wildlife management, monitoring of the environment, strengthening of institutions, creation of environmental awareness, introduction of new legislation, and participation in international and regional environmental programmes. At the same time, the plan devoted special attention to policy in specific sectors such as agriculture, tourism, mining, energy and rural development.

28. Cyprus also participated actively in various environmental programmes related to the Mediterranean and had acted as host to the 1990 conference which had adopted the so-called Nicosia Charter on cooperation concerning the environment in the Mediterranean basin. Cyprus had established excellent links with the United Nations and specialized agencies in connection with environmental problems and their assistance was sought whenever the need arose. In the context of the Mediterranean Action Plan, Cyprus participated actively in the Priority Actions Programme and a number of others.

29. Ms. KOFLER (Austria) said that the time allotted to preparations for the Conference was slowly running out while many issues of major importance remained unresolved. The recent informal consultations on an Earth Charter, on institutional questions and on financial resources and transfer of technology had heightened the sense of urgency.

30. In regard to the Earth Charter, her delegation believed that any charter or declaration adopted by the Conference should be fairly brief, should build upon accepted principles in the fields of environment and development and should be forward-looking. It would possess the moral authority inherent in an important decision of a major United Nations conference and it should inspire and guide policy decisions at the national, regional and global level for years to come. The challenge would be to draft a document that would be for environmentally sustainable development what the Universal Declaration was for human rights. Environment and development should be truly wedded in that document, which should be an integrated statement of principles that could serve as a guide in achieving environmentally sustainable development on a global scale.

31. As far as institutions were concerned, however, there was currently nowhere in the United Nations system where development and environment could be integrated. Functions related to development came within the mandates of many United Nations bodies, as did functions related to the environment. It

(Ms. Kofler, Austria)

would, of course, be desirable to establish as many connections as possible between the two fields, thus enhancing system-wide coordination. There should also be a forum in which to monitor implementation of the decisions taken in Rio, and creative ways should be found of involving non-governmental organizations and the business community as well as Governments.

32. The fourth session of the Preparatory Committee might provide a partial answer to the challenge of creating adequate institutional arrangements. The ongoing work on reforming the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 45/264, could be another step in the right direction. Ultimately, however, environmentally sustainable development should be seen as the guiding principle of all United Nations policy decisions and operational activities in the economic, social and related fields. Thus, responsibility for environmentally sustainable development could well be assigned to a reformed and strengthened Economic and Social Council.

33. A third area of interest to her delegation was the prevention and settlement of disputes. Austria had submitted, on behalf also of Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Yugoslavia, two proposals on the prevention and settlement of disputes concerning the environment (A/CONF.151/PC/L.29 and A/CONF.151/PC/WG.III/L.1). In accordance with decision 3/28 of the Preparatory Committee, one or two sessions of Working Group III would be devoted to questions of the prevention and settlement of disputes in the environmental sphere, as laid down in General Assembly resolution 44/228. Austria was reviewing the comments and proposals made on those texts so far and would welcome any further reaction from delegations.

34. Mr. METE (Albania) said that the forthcoming Conference would offer a unique opportunity to discuss strategies for environmental protection and set the guidelines for international cooperation on development.

35. The degradation of the environment in many regions of the world, including the Mediterranean region, had become a very serious threat, frequently resulting in irreversible damage to life-sustaining ecosystems. UNEP should move urgently to address those problems and to consider the legislation and investment required to meet the challenge to both industrialized and developing countries. The time had come for concerted efforts by all countries, with the help of UNEP, the World Bank and other international financial institutions.

36. As a Mediterranean country, Albania had become a party to the Barcelona Convention. It had received technical help under the Mediterranean Action Plan, and had itself trained many specialists in environmental protection. In the context of multiregional cooperation, cooperation among Mediterranean countries could serve as a testing ground for new ideas and solutions. Albania, together with other States of the Adriatic region and the European Community, had recently signed a declaration on the ecological protection of

(Mr. Mete, Albania)

the Adriatic Sea. Albania had also welcomed the Nicosia Charter on environmental cooperation between the Mediterrean region and the European Community, as well as other European conventions on environmental impact assessment, transboundary air pollution and protection of international waterways. It intended to seek the cooperation of the World Bank and other international institutions in order to carry out some of its priority national programmes for protection of the environment.

37. Albania's natural assets, including its rich flora and fauna and its coastline, were increasingly vulnerable to ecological degradation. The Government was aware of the gravity of the problem and had taken measures to use natural resources economically and to protect the environment, but it had not yet introduced all the necessary legislation. Environmental pollution was growing worse because of obsolete technology still in use in industry. Albania faced serious economic difficulties during the transition to a market economy at a time when the establishment of the rule of law was still incomplete. Not having sufficient financial resources to protect its environment, it regarded multilateral cooperation as the most effective way of dealing with the problem.

38. The discussion in the General Assembly of the arrangements for and aims of the Conference would enhance international cooperation in working out and implementing a real and lasting programme for protecting the environment and achieving sustainable development.

39. Mr. MATRI (Pakistan) said that a successful and balanced outcome of the Conference was critical for the future of the planet. He hoped it would mark the inception of an era of international cooperation and progress in which the needs and aspirations of all mankind would be fulfilled in an equitable, environmentally sound and sustainable manner.

40. The link between environment and development in the title of the Conference emphasized the need for an integrated approach. The narrowly defined agenda stressed by some of the industrialized countries reflected a somewhat shortsighted view. Environment must be studied in the larger context of the economic crisis facing the developing countries. A serious North-South dialogue was necessary in order to consider how to share the burden of adjustment equitably. The world environment suffered not only from underdevelopment but also from over-exploitation by the rich, and concessions from the South required commitments from the North as well. The depth of those commitments was not clear and there were few indications that they were regarded as having priority. The entire stress on environmental protection in most industrialized countries was directed towards a domestic constituency and there was no real effort to resolve the problem on a global scale. The developed countries must accept their responsibilities, both in seeking to enforce corrective policies and in assisting developing countries to participate in a global effort. The introduction of environmental protection was bound to widen the gap between developed and developing countries; extra

(Mr. Matri, Pakistan)

resources, as well as the transfer of environmentally sound technologies on concessional terms, were essential.

41. In Pakistan, the main environmental problems were desertification, waterlogging and salinity, soil degradation and waterborne diseases. The Government had developed a national conservation strategy to bring about environmentally sound and sustainable development, striking a balance between nature and industry, between human and natural resources. The strategy also covered research, legislation and coordinated environmental management at all levels.

42. Mr. OSSIO (Bolivia) said that his delegation wished to salute the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General of the Conference, who had played a fundamental role in the entire preparatory process. The three sessions of the Preparatory Committee had helped identify, analyse and better understand the items on the Conference agenda. The agenda had moreover been enhanced by the inclusion of items relating to human settlements, energy and the role of special groups, such as women and children and indigenous populations.

43. The Preparatory Committee's decision 3/2, on the structure and organization of Agenda 21, was fundamental. By virtue of its scope, objectives and comprehensive programme of action, the implementation of which would extend into the next century, Agenda 21 was expected to be the most important document of the Conference. It had therefore to be based on the inseparable link between the environment and development. According to decision 3/2, Agenda 21 should take into consideration ways of providing new and additional financial resources and action-oriented proposals related to the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

44. The Preparatory Committee had decided to continue negotiations on the transfer of technology on the basis of the Vice-Chairman's text annexed to decision 3/10. Although the text contained a series of brackets, it represented progress. In his view, it was time for countries to show greater flexibility and move away from false semantic issues, which were perhaps a means of avoiding compromise. Access of developing countries to environmentally sound technology was an indispensable complement to environmental protection and sustainable development.

45. The Preparatory Committee had thus far not paid adequate attention to the series of proposals concerning institutions. Decision 3/29 had merely requested the Secretary-General of the Conference to prepare an updated compilation of institutional proposals. Admittedly, that was perhaps the best way to proceed, in view of the sensitive nature of the issue and without knowing the scope of future agreements: appropriate institutional mechanisms could not be properly defined until the actions necessary to achieve the aims of the Conference had been identified. Nevertheless, there would clearly be a need for certain institutional mechanisms to ensure implementation and follow-up of the agreements concluded at the Conference. Those mechanisms

(Mr. Ossio, Bolivia)

should correspond to the importance and objectives of the agreements concerned as well as to the gravity, magnitude and complexity of the problems confronting the international community.

46. The success of the Conference would therefore depend on the outcome of the negotiations on three issues of fundamental importance to the developing countries: financial resources, transfer of technology, and institutions. Finding the appropriate solutions required a new direction in international cooperation: global agreements on sustainable development would be viable only if they included solutions to the priority problems of the developing countries.

47. Mr. GATHUNGU (Kenya) said that General Assembly resolution 44/228 remained a landmark in the history of mankind and had received enthusiastic support world wide; it was unique in seeking to reconcile human activities with environmental considerations. None the less, it was discouraging that the developing countries had had to expend so much energy and time to convince the developed countries that human activities were at the core of environmental degradation and must be dealt with from that perspective. He hoped that the developed countries would rally and assume their share of the responsibility, committing themselves to measures needed to restore the environment.

48. Human activities harmed the environment in two fundamental ways. The first was the waste of resources resulting from the ceaseless pursuit of affluence in the North, which could be ended by adopting consumption and production patterns which reduced waste, increased well-being, and limited the siphoning of resources from developing countries. The second was the waste resulting from the ever-increasing poverty and the consequent unproductive activities in developing countries; that problem could be mitigated by increasing productivity, which implied additional resources and technology, and retaining more capital for investment. At the same time, a host of factors, including international trade conditions, falling commodity prices, external indebtedness and demographic pressures, continued to hinder the developing countries from making progress in the fields of environment and development.

49. His country still maintained that it would be best to address the legal and institutional issues relating to environment and development after the objectives in that area had been defined and the role of the United Nations had been determined.

50. An individual's well-being was largely determined by his shelter. The planet had enough space to provide adequate shelter for all without destroying the environment; moreover, building housing contributed to development. His delegation was therefore pleased that the subject of human settlements was under consideration by the Preparatory Committee.

(Mr. Gathungu, Kenya)

51. The issue of women and the environment would also be considered at the Preparatory Committee's fourth session. He noted that discussion on that issue had thus far been limited to the situation of women at the national level. Yet at the international level, women faced some of the same problems as men, for example, trade barriers, protectionist policies and high prices for imports, and other problems which were unique to women, such as limited access to higher education abroad. Developed countries wishing to promote the advancement of women in developing countries should make proposals for action at the international level, with a view to considering them at the fourth session.

52. The Preparatory Committee faced the enormous challenge of completing its work in time for the Conference. Much remained to be done in the areas of the Earth Charter, Agenda 21 and sectoral and cross-sectoral issues, particularly as they affected developing countries. His delegation was concerned that participation of those countries in the Committee's fourth session and in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee concerned with drafting a framework convention on climate change, could be jeopardized by lack of funds; it therefore supported the appeals for contributions launched by the Secretary-General of the Conference.

53. Mr. BALE (Congo) said that preparations for the Conference were at the stage where the airing of regional perspectives must give way to a search for ways to harmonize the various positions. None the less, it was generally acknowledged that the industrialized countries, which had been the principal beneficiaries of technology, were responsible for the instability and risks facing the world and had a moral duty to respond to those challenges. Moreover, protection of the global environment was inconceivable without a more equitable distribution of wealth. In that connection, his delegation firmly endorsed the statement by Ghana on behalf of the Group of 77.

54. Environmental issues had to be approached through regional and international cooperation. His country wished to reiterate its commitment to that cooperation, made even more tangible by its recent election to the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). His Government had moreover promulgated a law which stressed the link between environment and development. Environmental matters would henceforth be incorporated into national education programmes, in particular with respect to sensitizing rural populations to ecological concerns. Under current legislation and administrative regulations, Congolese enterprises were responsible for the assessment of and reparations for any damage arising from their activities, according to the universal principle of "the polluter pays".

55. Forestry, a major source of revenue for his country, was governed by the forestry code, which regulated logging, while protecting the environment. The development strategy in that sector was based on greater production; increased cultivation of rapid-growth species; and artifical forestation, in which the Congo had extensive experience. It was participating in a regional project

(Mr. Bale, Congo)

for the conservation and rational utilization of forests in Central Africa, financed by the European Development Fund and, in that connection, he wished to thank the European Community for its support. In addition, UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were carrying out in the Congo pilot operations on management of the forest ecosystem.

56. Action to combat environmental degradation should be part of the international community's efforts to revitalize economic growth and promote development. The Conference must therefore agree on a global strategy which took into account not only global problems but also environmental protection and economic growth at the regional and local levels.

57. Mr. GALGAU (Romania) said that a new awareness of the fragility of the world's ecosystem had gradually led to a sense of common responsibility for preserving the environment. Eastern European countries, which had played an inconspicuous role in the past had become vocal supporters of national and international measures to improve the environment. Ecological concern among citizens had expanded from the Western countries to become an international phenomenon. Greater attention was also being paid to the link between environment and development.

58. Preparations for the Conference had thus far been quite productive. Important progress had been made, particularly during the third session of the Preparatory Committee, on the main items of the Conference agenda and on the basic elements of an Earth Charter and of Agenda 21. He wished in that regard to pay tribute to the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee and the Secretary-General of the Conference for having developed a comprehensive "package" for the Conference.

59. His delegation had noted with satisfaction the statements made by the European Community, the Nordic countries and other industrialized countries, in which they had clearly acknowledged the need for a substantial increase in their support for efforts to achieve sustainable development being undertaken by developing countries and economies in transition. That implied not only new and additional financial resources but also new forms of assistance for environmental management and increased access to new and environmentally sound technology. Serious and imaginative consideration of those questions during the fourth session of the Preparatory Committee could have a decisive impact on the outcome of the Conference.

60. Significant advances had been made towards a framework convention on climate change in the past year and his delegation hoped that the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would mark further progress in agreeing on an integrated draft text that could be adopted at the Conference. It therefore fully supported the idea of holding one or two more working sessions of the Committee, as well as the call for increased financial contributions to allow all delegations, including those of developing countries, to participate in the final stage of negotiations. Those

(Mr. Galgau, Romania)

negotiations should not be hampered by lingering scientific uncertainties about the feasible rate of burning fossil fuels or the widespread misconception that combating climate change would be costly and inconvenient. An inspiring example in that regard was provided by the unanimous agreement just reached at Geneva by European and North American countries to cut or freeze their emissions of volatile organic compounds.

61. The need to protect the ecological balance of the planet was perhaps one of the most urgent global development challenges. From that viewpoint, the Conference should be seen as a bridge between global environmental concerns, the many different initiatives already undertaken to face them and concerted action by the whole international community to promote new and environmentally sound economic development.

62. Furthermore, since every investment decision had potential transboundary environmental effects, it was moreover essential to involve not only public and governmental institutions but above all the business community in constructively defining environmental problems and developing solutions. The international community had to reassess its values and reinforce its ethical commitments to earth's gifts if the current threats of ecological degradation were to be diminished and eventually removed.

63. Mr. ISAKSSON (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that the emphasis on the linkage between environment and development made the 1992 Conference very different from the 1972 Stockholm Conference. UNESCO's deep commitment to the forthcoming Conference, based on the concept of environmentally sound and sustainable development as defined in General Assembly resolution 44/228, had been strongly endorsed at the recent twenty-sixth session of its General Conference, which had adopted a Declaration on the role of the UNESCO in relation to the 1992 Conference. Noting that UNESCO was uniquely placed to promote intersectoral and interdisciplinary work, the General Conference in its Declaration had stressed the key role of environmental and developmental education and information, as well as the importance of international scientific cooperation including natural, basic, engineering and social and human sciences, national and regional scientific capacity-building, and technology transfer, in particular in developing countries. The Declaration ended with an appeal that UNESCO should play a major role in the implementation of components of Agenda 21 concerning education, science, technology and culture in relation to environment and development.

64. In the preparation for the 1992 Conference, UNESCO had contributed to the work of a number of working groups, and would participate in the preparatory conference on water and environment to be held in Dublin, Ireland in January 1992. As the Director-General of UNESCO had indicated, the Rio Conference and Agenda 21 were a challenge and an opportunity for the organizations of the United Nations system to demonstrate their capacity to work together as a real system. UNESCO was ready to reinforce further its

(Mr. Isaksson, UNESCO)

work with Governments, other United Nations organizations, the relevant non-governmental organizations and the international scientific community in order to make the Conference and its follow-up fully successful.

65. Regarding the protection of global climate, UNESCO and its Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) were concerned in particular with three main topics: the major role of oceans in governing the world climate system and climate change; the role of the global water cycle in climate and the impact of climate change on freshwater resources; and training, education and public awareness related to those specific topics and to the climate in general. The first two topics were areas in which UNESCO had contributed significantly to the World Climate Programme and, in partnership with other international bodies and programmes, it was also studying the land-atmosphere interface and the impact of climate change on terrestrial ecosystems, past climate changes in relation to geological processes and the energy/climate link.

66. Many of the most severe potential impacts of climate change were transmitted through the ocean and UNESCO, mainly through the programmes of IOC, was helping to elucidate those questions. Scientific assessments also pointed to the urgent need for a global ocean observing system to make reliable climate-change predictions. An agreement to support and jointly develop the system had been signed by IOC, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in October 1991. Plans for the system were well advanced and he urged that it should be given due attention.

67. Another scientific area of interest to UNESCO was the hydrological cycle. Its International Hydrological Programme had undertaken to study many of the little-known aspects of hydrology and water resources for sustainable development in a changing environment. UNESCO was also carrying out research on the effects of global warming on plant and animal life, on ecosystems and agro-ecosystems in its Intergovernmental Programme on Man and the Biosphere.

68. Climate change was a world-wide problem with important regional and national implications, and a solution needed to be found through globally concerted action, including special intellectual efforts in the three areas of UNESCO's competence: science and technology, education, and information, particularly information for decision makers.

69. Following the Second World Climate Conference in October 1990, the co-sponsors had continued to work together within the framework of the World Climate Programme, involving the essential parts of society to create a joint and strong commitment. It was now very necessary to involve all nations much more in that work.

70. Mr. MOZHUKHOV (Belarus), speaking on agenda item 78, said that the Republic of Belarus had a special interest in preparations for the Conference as its Parliament had declared the whole country an environmental disaster area in view of the tragic scale of the transboundary radiological effects of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. It would continue to participate actively in the work of all multilateral and bilateral international mechanisms and structures dealing with the issues of environment and development not only for those reasons, however. It held a position predicated on international solidarity and the joint responsibility of the entire world community for the future of planet Earth, and it shared the view that preserving environmental quality and making rational use of natural resources, under conditions of growing interdependence in the economic and other fields and of unprecedented changes in international life, responded to the current and long-term interests of all countries.

71. Each country nevertheless had to make a realistic assessment not only of others' contribution to the destruction of the environment but also of its own contribution to protecting the environment at the national and international levels. Natural systems would take centuries to recover from the damage already inflicted and it was to be hoped that the world had not gone beyond the point where such damage would become irreversible. Further progress, the continued survival of mankind and the securing of fundamental rights and decent living conditions were unthinkable without environmental safety.

72. As indicated in the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/46/3, para. 36), the Chernobyl disaster had shown the global scale of environmental repercussions, calling for concerted international action and cooperation. In that context, the Rio Conference should constitute a landmark not only in public awareness-raising but in the harmonization of common approaches to strategies for environmental protection and economic cooperation among all States, and should result in the adoption of binding agreements.

73. His delegation hoped that the reports of the second and third sessions of the Preparatory Committee would be endorsed by the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session. Nevertheless, it appreciated the concern of some delegations that many fundamental issues still had to be resolved and trusted that a spirit of cooperation, political will and a high level of representation of Member States at the fourth session would bring progress in the negotiations on drafting specific agreements and conventions.

74. The adoption of the Earth Charter and Agenda 21 and the signing of conventions on climate change and biological diversity, and possibly also on forests, would justify the preparatory efforts. The Conference should devote particular attention to the problems of the developing countries, transfer of technology, financial resources, cross-sectoral issues and the relationships between particular problems. Agenda 21 should duly reflect the linkage between sustainable development and energy safety, and might also include the question of preventing radiation-related global environmental degradation, a

(Mr. Mozhukhov, Belarus)

sensitive issue not only for Belarus, Ukraine and Russia but no doubt also for Japan and a number of other States.

75. Belarus had prepared a national report and was defining its position with regard to the Conference agenda. During the difficult period of transition, his country's authorities were nevertheless taking further national measures to ensure the environmental safety of the Belarusian people and to deal with the extremely complex problems resulting from the Chernobyl disaster.

76. The bitter lessons of Chernobyl had confirmed his country in the view that the main responsibility for environmentally sound and sustainable development and the prevention of all local and transboundary ecological disasters must lie with States themselves. However, it was essential to recognize joint responsibility, to promote concerted international action and to adopt binding international environmental agreements, notably in the sphere of responsibility for transboundary environmental harm.

77. While reserving the right to elaborate on his position at a later stage, he wished to assure all delegations that his country would contribute constructively to the success of the Conference.

78. The CHAIRMAN announced that the Committee had concluded its general discussion of items 78 and 79.

AGENDA ITEM 84: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/C.2/46/L.42)

79. The CHAIRMAN said that Algeria and Oman had joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/C.2/46/L.42.

The meeting rose at 8.35 p.m.